LONG LIVE VINYL

ISSUE 17
AUGUST 2018
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Hounds Of Love

Alan McGee
RIDE, OASIS,
THE LIBERTINES…
A LIFE IN VINYL

Ash
"WE'VE PRETTY
MUCH WRITTEN
A NEW ALBUM"

GRIME ON VINYL

The Who

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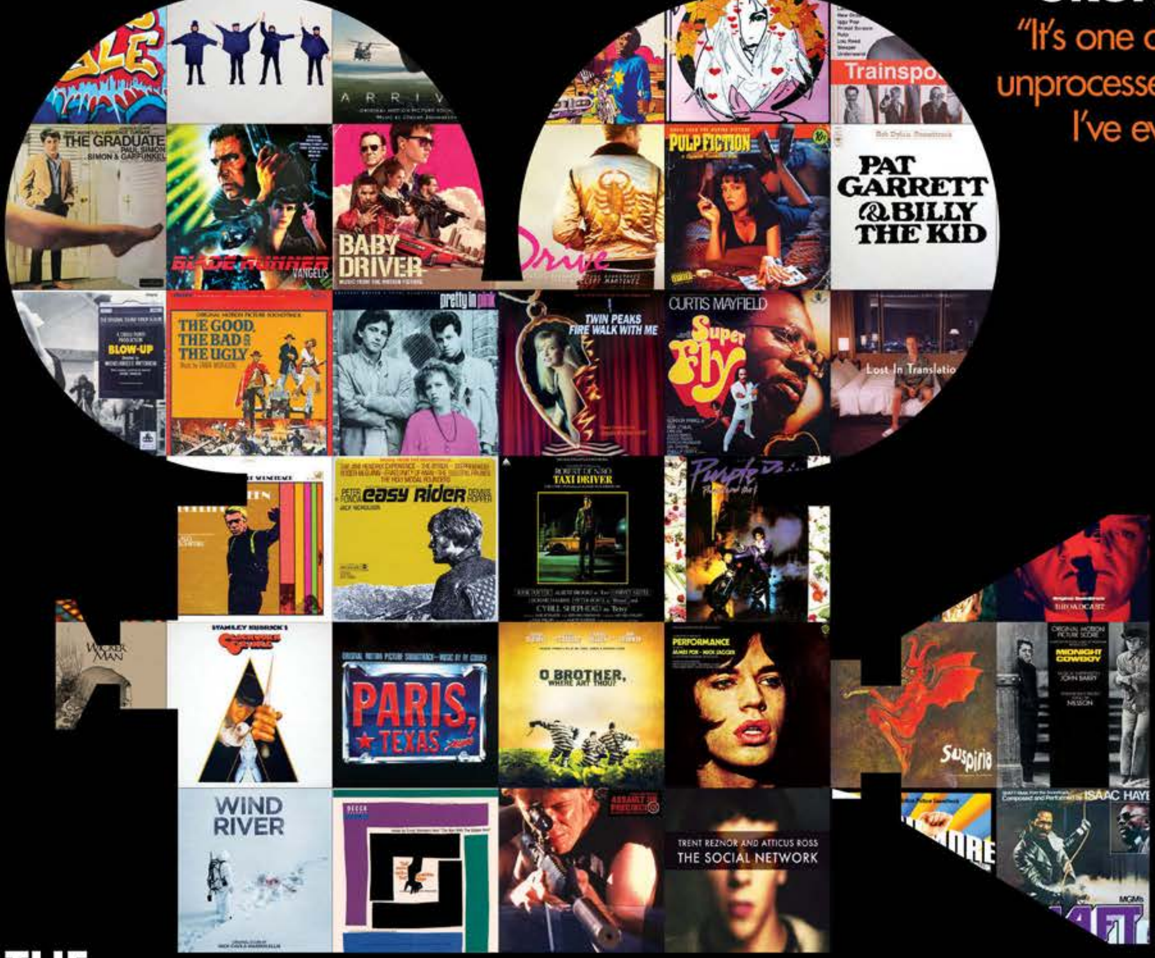
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BLADE RUNNER
VANGELIS
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Drive
PULP FICTION
PAT GARRETT & BILLY THE KID
Trainspotting
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THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY
pretty in pink
TWIN PEAKS FIRE WALK WITH ME
CURTIS MAYFIELD
Super Fly
Lost In Translation
easy rider
TAXI DRIVER
Purple Rain
STANLEY KUBRICK'S A CLOCKWORK ORANGE
PARIS, TEXAS
O BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU?
PERFORMANCE
Suspiria
MIDNIGHT COWBOY
WIND RIVER
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THE SOCIAL NETWORK
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THE SOUNDTRACKS ISSUE

The Godfather, Blade Runner, Super Fly, Purple Rain, Help!…

50 FILM CLASSICS

+ INVADA RECORDS

THE MAGAZINE
FOR VINYL LOVERS

REVIEWED

The Rolling Stones, Yes,
Guns N' Roses, Ty Segall,
Gorillaz, Teenage Fanclub,
Nine Inch Nails, Erasure
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+ TURNTABLES & ACCESSORIES

Welcome...

The list of 2017's best-selling albums on vinyl included two soundtracks – *Guardians Of The Galaxy: Awesome Mix Vol. 1* and *La La Land*. While mass popularity is not always an accurate barometer of artistic value – and neither of those records are fixtures on the *Long Live Vinyl* office turntable – the significance of the vinyl soundtrack in music history cannot be denied: a mutually beneficial connecting fibre between two mediums that saw huge booms in the early-to-mid 20th century, before coming under threat from the digital revolution.

> *The significance of the vinyl soundtrack in music history cannot be denied*

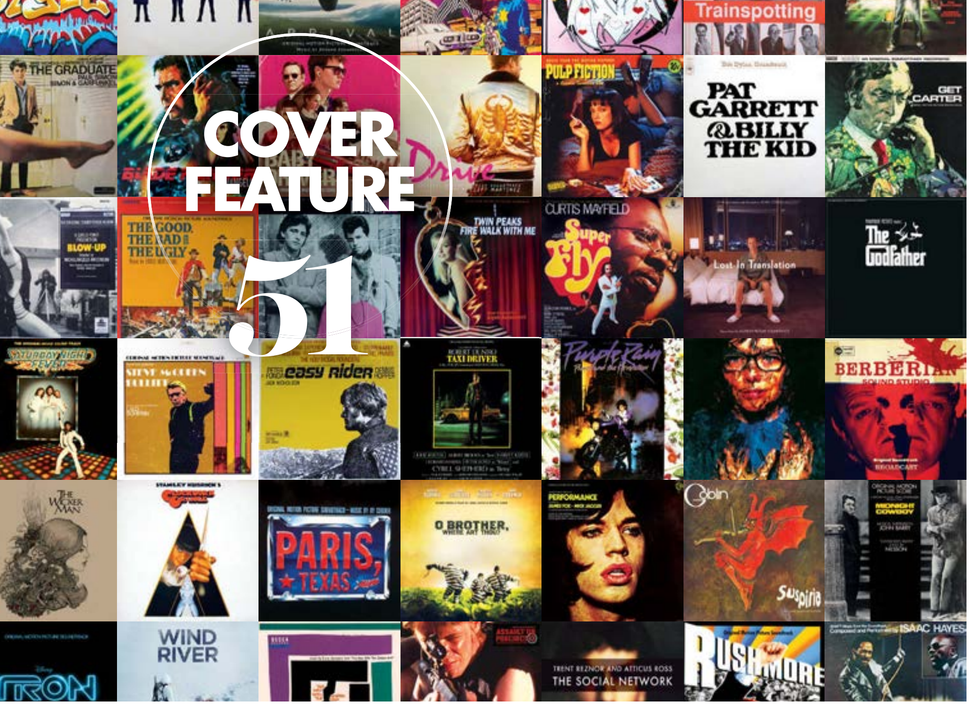
Try to picture Michael Madsen's gruesome cop-torturing in *Reservoir Dogs* without hearing Stealers Wheel's *Stuck In The Middle With You*. Or Marlon Brando's fearsome performance in *The Godfather* without bringing to mind Nino Rota's Grammy-winning soundtrack. Or – a personal favourite – Richard E Grant stumbling around the squalor of his London flat in the opening moments of *Withnail And I* minus the rich melancholic saxophone of King Curtis' *A Whiter Shade Of Pale*. Or any of the 11 James Bond films that John Barry soundtracked without his unique musical genius. More recently, labels such as Silva Screen and Invada have become home to some of the coolest soundtracks on vinyl, including Cliff Martinez drenching Ryan Gosling's stellar turn in *Drive* with shimmering electro, and Kyle Dixon and Michael Stein's nostalgic 80s atmospherics for Netflix blockbuster *Stranger Things*. Whatever your favourite soundtrack, turn to p51 for our Top 50, then read on as Redg Weeks and Geoff Barrow tell the Invada story.

Elsewhere, Creation Records co-founder Alan McGee picks out the records that have soundtracked his remarkable career, one that saw him shape the talents of Ride, My Bloody Valentine, Primal Scream, Oasis and The Libertines, to name a few. Ash frontman Tim Wheeler tells us how he travelled the world to write the band's vibrant seventh album, *Islands*, Gruff Rhys reflects on the making of his latest, *Babelsberg,* and John Lydon explains why he's happier in PiL than he ever was with the Sex Pistols. We also delve into the records that have been central to arguably British music's most original and anarchic movement since Lydon's late-70s punks tore up the rock rulebook – grime – and visit Birmingham in The Trip, while fans of The Who should turn to p66 for our Essential collector's guide. Finally, it would be remiss not to wish Kate Bush a happy 60th birthday, as our Classic Album feature focuses on her 1985 classic *Hounds Of Love*. Enjoy.

Gary

Gary Walker *Editor*

LONGLIVEVINYL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The Graduate
Blow-Up
The Good, the Bad and the Ugly
Drive
Twin Peaks Fire Walk With Me
Pulp Fiction
Curtis Mayfield Super Fly
Trainspotting
Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid
Lost In Translation
Get Carter
The Godfather
Saturday Night Fever
Steve McQueen Bullitt
Easy Rider
Taxi Driver
Purple Rain
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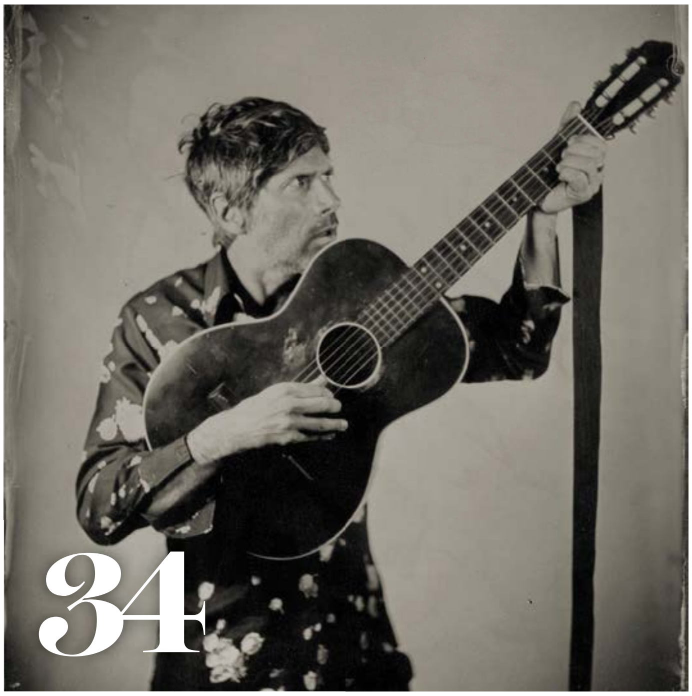

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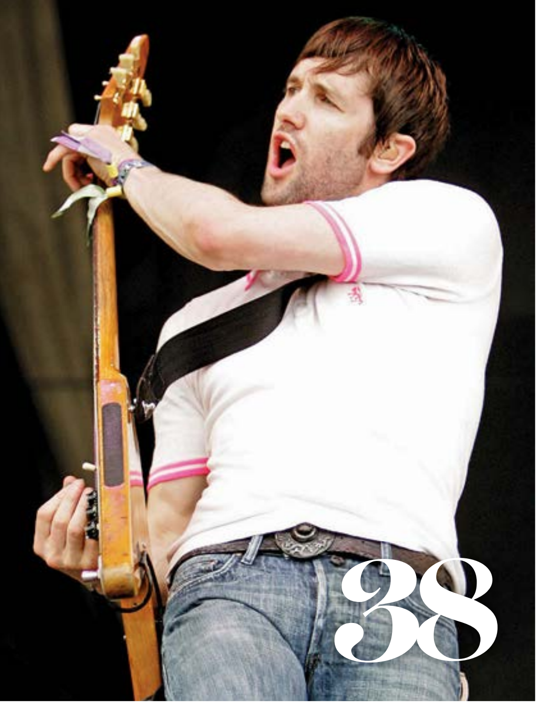

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LONG LIVE VINYL

The *Long Live Vinyl* team pick their favourite soundtracks…

Gary Walker
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Owen Bailey
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Vangelis

Jonny Highett
The Virgin Suicides
Air

Andy Cottle
The Mission
Ennio Morricone

Ian Peel
1984 (For The Love Of Big Brother) Eurythmics

Meet our expert contributors…

Simon Raymonde

Simon was the bassist and keyboard player in the Cocteau Twins; he's currently in Lost Horizons. He launched the independent label Bella Union in 1997. His label has been a home to bands including Fleet Foxes, The Flaming Lips, Midlake, Father John Misty, John Grant, Explosions In The Sky and Lanterns On The Lake. He's also produced many great albums.

Gary Tipp

Gary has been collecting vinyl since time immemorial and still can't walk past a charity shop without going in on the off chance there's a mint treasure nestled somewhere in between the easy listening and the obligatory copy of Paul Young's *No Parlez*. He's also been writing words for magazines for longer than anyone can remember.

Ben Wardle

Having clogged up the nation's homes with Sleeper and Wannadies records in the 1990s, Ben left his job as an A&R man to become a writer. He's written for all the usual mags and newspapers, had several books published, including *The Art Of The LP*, and is a uni lecturer in Music Business. He writes and presents regular music columns for the BBC's *Front Row*.

Jonathan Wright

Jonathan began writing about music in the late 80s. He's interviewed such singular talents as Shaun Ryder, Edwyn Collins and Richey Edwards. He's written for *The Guardian*, *Classic Pop* and many others. Jonathan edited *Adventure Rocketship! Let's All Go To The Science Fiction Disco*, a book of essays about the interface between geek culture and music.

Teri Saccone

A veteran music journalist who grew up in New York, Teri voraciously pored over album sleeves as a child, studying studio and songwriting credits. Later, she was sucked into the vortex of the music industry while still at university. A sometimes beauty and fashion writer, besides the aural wonders of vinyl, she loves the aesthetics of album design and artwork.

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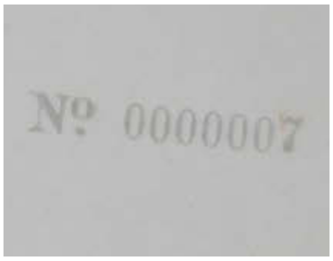

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7284
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Produced by Dave Goodman
AM

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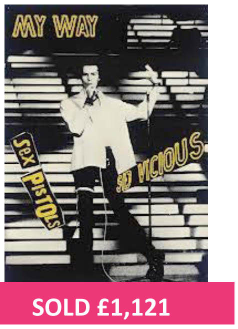
MY WAY
SID VICIOUS
SEX PISTOLS

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SOLD £4,465

Ringo's Help Cape

SOLD £61,000

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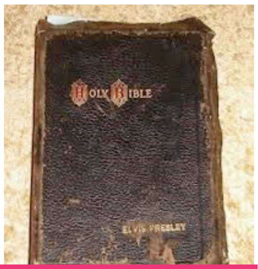
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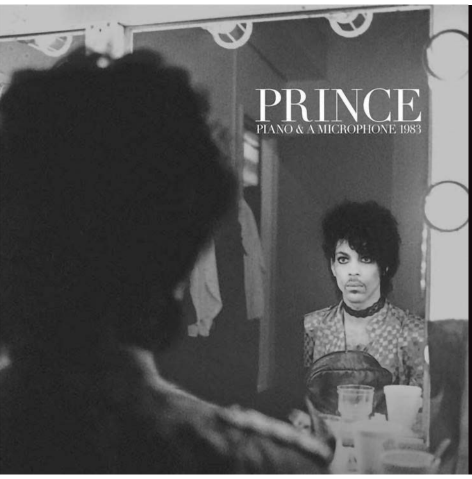
On the record



PAISLEY PIANO

Unreleased piano tracks taken from cassette recordings of Prince in Paisley Park

More Prince news reached us after last issue's 60th birthday tribute to the late Minneapolis legend had gone to press, as The Prince Estate, in partnership with Warner, announced a new Prince album entitled *Piano & A Microphone 1983*. Set for release on 21 September, the nine-track, 35-minute album will feature a previously unreleased cassette recording of Prince at the piano in his home studio in 1983.

The private rehearsal provides a rare glimpse into Prince's creative process as he worked through songs including *17 Days*, *Purple Rain*, a cover of Joni Mitchell's *A Case Of You*, *Strange Relationship* and *International Lover*. It also includes the 19th-century spiritual *Mary Don't You Weep*. The LP version comes with new liner notes written by Prince's then-engineer Don Batts, and never-before-seen photos of Prince.

5,832

The price in dollars that a limited-edition copy of Judge's *Chung King Can Suck It* on Revelation Records sold for. Only 100 copies were pressed and No. 43 in the series had a gatefold sleeve. It was Discogs' most expensive sale of the month.

Flaming Grooves

The Flaming Lips continue their exhaustive reissue campaign with the release of their pre-Warner Restless Records output, plus a 2LP rarities collection. All of the music has been remastered by producer David Fridmann and will be in shops in two waves, on 27 July and 14 September.

THE FLAMING LIPS
TELEPATHI
C SUR
THE FLAM

50 YEARS OF SORROW

The Pretty Things' 1968 classic *S.F. Sorrow* is given the 50th Anniversary Edition boxset treatment on 27 July. The cult R&B heroes, who formed 55 years ago, created some of the most innovative records of the 60s and early 70s and *S.F. Sorrow* is widely regarded as the world's first rock opera, pre-dating The Who's *Tommy*. Released through Madfish, the deluxe boxset features four 12" LPs, four rare European 60s picture sleeve 7" singles and handwritten recollections from Phil May, Dick Taylor, Jon Povey and Wally Waller.

NON-IDENTICAL TWIN
Aphex Twin's debut album, *Selected Ambient Works 85–92* has been re-pressed on vinyl by R&S and Apollo Records, featuring the 2013 remaster cut by Matt Colton.

IF YOU'RE FEELING NAUTICAL
The Boaty Weekender is a four-day festival and cruise from Barcelona to Sardinia and back curated by Belle And Sebastian. The cruise sets sail on 8 August, 2019.

AIMING HIGH
The AIM Independent Music Awards 2018, celebrating innovation and legacy in independent music, take place on 4 September at The Brewery in Clerkenwell.

RADIO STARS
This month's Blue Dot Festival at Jodrell Bank sees the Radiophonic Workshop's 60th-birthday celebrations continue – they'll be artists in residence.

JAZZY JEFF
GOLDBLUM SIGNS TO DECCA FOR DEBUT

Decca Records have announced the signing of *Jurassic Park* and *Independence Day* actor Jeff Goldblum, who will release his debut jazz album on the label. The Hollywood star has played the piano since he was a child and performs with his jazz band, The Mildred Snitzer Orchestra.

21
singles
thejesusandmarychain

Jesus Resurrected
21 Singles set for vinyl release

The Jesus And Mary Chain release their career-spanning compilation album *21 Singles* on double 180g vinyl for the first time on 6 July. Originally released on CD in 2002, *21 Singles* rounds up all of the Glasgow band's singles in chronological order. It charts the journey from their Creation Records early years through their 80s and 90s Blanco Y Negro heyday, to their eventual return to Creation in 1998 and their later releases on Sub Pop. Many of the versions on *21 Singles* are unique and alternative to their album counterparts.

Simon says

SIMON RAYMONDE

Jason Pierce is back with a new Spiritualized album on Bella Union, and our columnist is impressed to say the least. Ladies and gentlemen, we are emoting in spades…

By the time you read this, the news will be out. The Spaceman himself, Jason Pierce, is back, with not just a new Spiritualized album – but to my humble mind, the best record Jason has made in 21 years. And I love *everything* this man has done. To compare it to *Ladies And Gentlemen We Are Floating In Space* would be foolhardy at this early stage, because of course 'classic' status is not attained overnight – but what I can tell you is this…

I first met Jason in 2013, though it's quite possible we had met before. Much of the 90s were a blur for me, and from things I've heard, they were for Jason, too (though I don't believe much of what I hear about people in this business – I prefer to make up my own mind). When drugs are mentioned in passing, or in the press, in relation to my own band Cocteau Twins, or friends of mine in bands, there's always some wildly (or at least mildly) exaggerated part to a particular story that no band is ever going to deny. In fact, I've never met a band yet that didn't quietly relish a reputation for overindulgence. I am sure even I have said in the past that Robin from my own band made John Belushi look like a mild weekend pothead.

Our first meeting didn't start off quite as planned. We'd arranged to meet at Viet Hoa on Kingsland Road in Shoreditch, near the Bella Union offices. I was the first person in the restaurant, and sat quietly in this empty room, sipping calmly from my glass of water. After 20 minutes, I thought I should probably text Jason, in case he was lost. He texted back to say sorry, he was running a little late; he'd be there in the next 15 minutes. I ordered some starters and checked some emails. Half an hour went by and he still hadn't showed up, so I called him to ask if all was okay. "Yeah man, where are you?" he said. "I'm sat in the restaurant, but don't think I can see you. Did you leave?" While I wasn't alone in the restaurant anymore, it was still empty enough for me to know that Jason Pierce, one of my favourite musicians on the planet, was certainly not floating in this space. "Well, there's only three other people in here and you're definitely not one of them. Are you sure you're at Viet Hoa, Kingsland Road?" He replied quickly: "Oh shit. No, I'm at a different Vietnamese restaurant!"

So eventually, we met up and had a lovely lunch together. We did this again a few weeks later – without the messed-up arrangement part – and again, talked more and more. He made me laugh a lot, and yet I found him to be smart and so very together, and I liked him enormously. I don't know why I was a little surprised about that part, but I guess we were checking each other out – an important part of the process, especially for me.

> ***Jason signed to Bella Union in 2013, and I guess we could all be forgiven for thinking: 'What the hell's he been doing since then?'***

Bella Union only works when we sign bands we really love, and I don't just mean love their music, though of course, that is the prime reason we're interested in the first place! I can't sign bands just because I think they'll do well, if my heart isn't in it. Plus, I truly have no idea what does well and what doesn't. I don't follow charts, I don't look at the sales figures and I literally have almost no idea about how things are doing, unless someone tells me. It sounds daft, I realise that, but I just genuinely don't find that stuff at all interesting. I mean, sure it's important before you get on a conference call with some hardcore manager who wants to go over fine-detailed stuff to know what the headline stuff is, but seriously, that is not the best use of whatever talent I have.

Numbers, analysis and the vogue for looking at patterns in streaming numbers is not what I was put on the planet for. My place in this whole shebang is to talk to musicians like Jason Pierce and work out if what they're doing, or want to do, is something I can really relate to; because if it is, then I can really help. I was enthralled by Jason's passion for his music, the fierce determination to make an album the equal of *Ladies And Gentlemen…* for himself. He needed to prove to himself he could do it. I didn't need any proof. I knew he could: I saw it deep in his emerald eyes and in studying the contours of his sweet face.

And I've never wavered in my belief that he would do it. Maybe I *could* have – after all, he signed to Bella Union in 2013 and well, sure, I guess we could all be forgiven for thinking: "What the hell's he been doing since then?". While I won't spoil the stories he'll tell you all in the run-up to the release, what I'll happily say is, for all those countless label meetings I've had over the last five years, where I've been asked every other week: "When's the Spiritualized album coming?", every second was worth it. I know he would've finished it quicker if he could have, but I know these feelings only too well. You need to be sure it's right. Even if once it's out, you change your mind, before you hand it over, you need to be sure it's right. And this, my friends, is so right. It's a perfect miracle – and nothing hurt. ●

***SIMON RAYMONDE** is currently in Lost Horizons and was the bassist and keyboard player in Cocteau Twins. He founded the independent record label Bella Union*

Hard Lines coffee and vinyl café will be serving up eclectic tunes and frothy coffee to festival-goers at the Green Man festival in August

Coffee And Vinyl

Cardiff's Hard Lines vinyl café will be providing a haven for vinyl addicts at August's Green Man festival in the Brecon Beacons, spinning an eclectic mix of records and serving up restorative coffees. This year's festival has a stellar line-up, with Fleet Foxes, The War On Drugs, King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard and John Grant topping the bill. *Long Live Vinyl* caught up with Sophie Smith of Hard Lines to find out what festival-goers can expect to find at the café this summer.

What is the café's background?

"Hard Lines is run by myself and Matt. We're two former event technicians with a passion for coffee and music; specifically vinyl! We started as a little pop-up moving around craft-beer bars, events and festivals. Now, in 2018, we have two small shops in our hometown of Cardiff."

How have the two shops gone down with the people of Cardiff?

"So far, so good! We have a loyal following of people who really like what we're trying to do – the music we buy, the events we put on, etc. But also, we've been able to develop our stock and our own musical knowledge through our customers' suggestions, which has been really great. It's still a journey that's very much ongoing…"

How did the decision to take the café to Green Man come about? What can people who haven't heard of Hard Lines before expect to find?

"Well, before Hard Lines, we'd been going to Green Man and loving it. We got in touch with Green Man early on to let them know what we were trying to do and they were fully onboard and offered us our setup in the settlement! Their support has been invaluable and we're really thankful."

What kind of music can people expect to hear in the café?

"A mix of Green Man past and present, and anything from Ebo Taylor to Swiss house music to disco classics and everything in between!"

What makes Green Man such a special festival?

"We've attended and worked at many festivals in the UK and abroad, and there really isn't anything quite like Green Man: the setting, the line-up and the atmosphere. Even though it's bigger than ever, it does still feel like a local festival for us."

Who are you looking forward to sneaking out of the café and seeing on this year's bill?

"Kelly Lee Owens, Baxter Dury, John Talabot, Snapped Ankles, Frankie Cosmos, Omni, Bo Ningen…"

Discogs TRENDING CHART

The Top 10 trending vinyl releases from the Discogs community this month

10 Love Is Dead
Chvrches

9 God's Favorite Customer
Father John Misty

8 Tranquility Base Hotel + Casino
Arctic Monkeys

7 Mm.. Food
MF Doom

6 Tell Me How You Really Feel
Courtney Barnett

5 Doggystyle
Snoop Doggy Dogg

4 Prequelle
Ghost

3 Prequelle
Ghost

2 Pulse
Pink Floyd

1 Return To Cookie Mountain
TV On The Radio

Official Vinyl Albums Chart

JUNE 2018

1 Tranquility Base Hotel + Casino
Arctic Monkeys

2 Wildness
Snow Patrol

3 Tell Me How You Really Feel
Courtney Barnett

4 MTV Unplugged (Live At Roundhouse, London)
Biffy Clyro

5 The Greatest Showman
Motion Picture Cast Recording

6 God's Favorite Customer
Father John Misty

7 Light Years
Kylie Minogue

8 Noondday Dream
Ben Howard

9 Prequelle
Ghost

10 Straight Outta Compton
N.W.A

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WHO'S MISS

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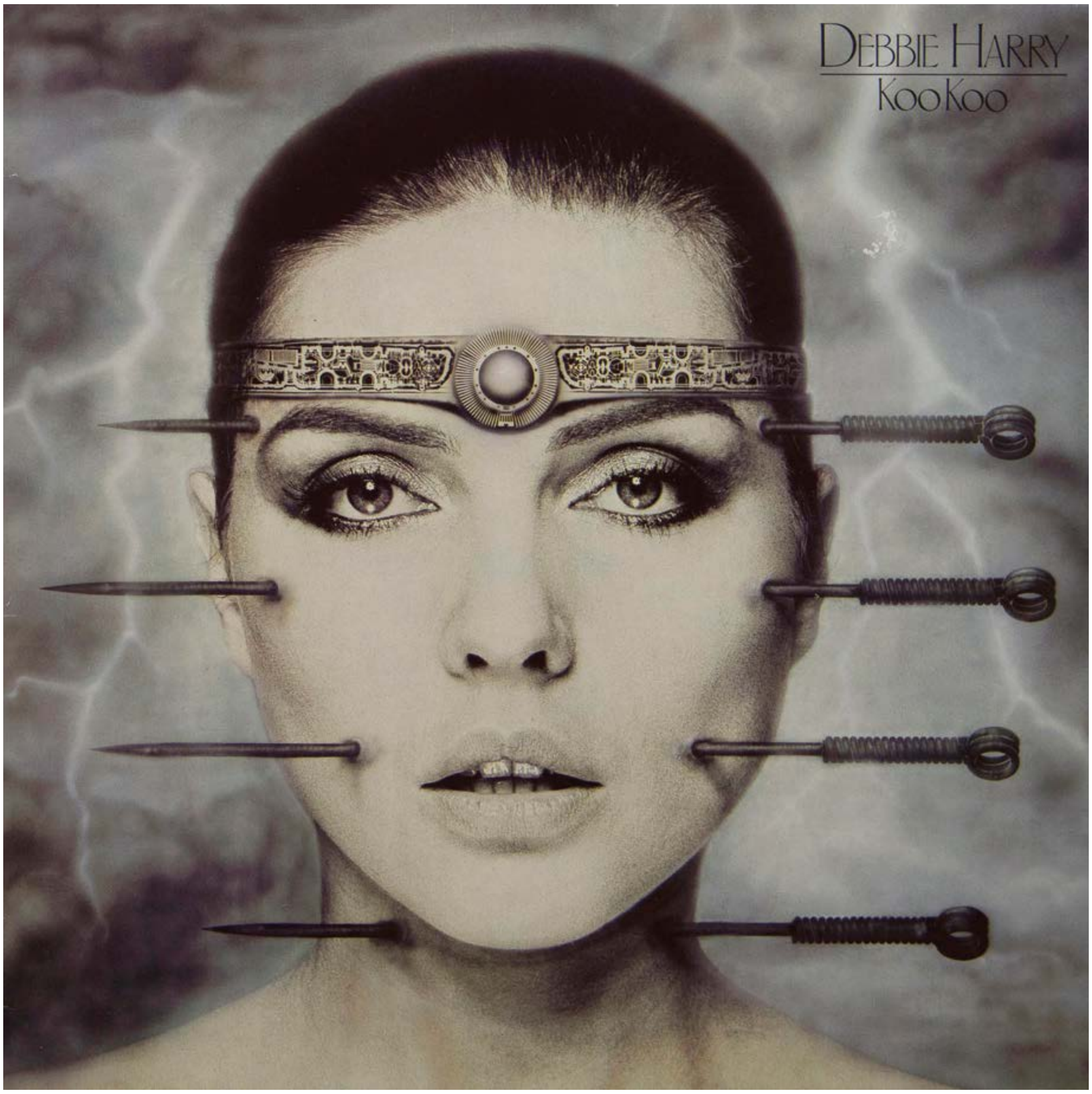

#15 KooKoo

Debbie Harry

In the spring of 1980, Blondie's Chris Stein and Debbie Harry met HR Giger at a New York party, where his Academy Award-winning work for *Alien* was on display. The pair asked Giger to design the sleeve for Harry's first solo album. The Swiss artist agreed and was "greatly pleased to be allowed to create something for such an attractive woman". Giger had recently undergone acupuncture from his friend Dr Paul Tobler, and drew inspiration from the process. "The idea of the four needles came to me, in which I saw symbols of the four elements, to be combined with her face," he said. The band approved and travelled to stay at his house in Zurich. Giger had to make a separate cast of each half of Harry's face because of her claustrophobia. Writing for *Heavy Metal* magazine, Stein and Harry later described Giger's work as "awesome – the work of an ultimate perfectionist, a true obsessive", but the response to the controversial cover wasn't universally positive – it was banned from adverts on British transport.

BREWDOG
COCOA PSYCHO
RUSSIAN IMPERIAL STOUT

Now Spinning

The 12 tracks spinning on *Long Live Vinyl*'s office turntable this issue. With the football World Cup in Russia in full swing, listen with a bottle of BrewDog's Cocoa Psycho, an indulgent Russian Imperial stout with notes of coffee, cocoa and vanilla.

1 ***Retina*** – False Heads (Vallance Records)
2 *Sports Men* – **Haruomi Hosono (Light In The Attic)**
3 ***Frontier Man*** – Gruff Rhys (Rough Trade)
4 *Jack Names The Planets* – **Ash (La La Land)**
5 **Talking Straight** – Rolling Blackouts Coastal Fever (Sub Pop)
6 *Pale Burnt Lake* – **Virginia Wing (Fire Records)**
7 ***Clear*** – Matty (Matty Unlimited/Awal)
8 *Make It Easy On Yourself* – **The Walker Brothers (Bella Union)**
9 ***The Big Sky*** – Kate Bush (EMI)
10 *Who's Comin' In?* – **Pictish Trail (Fire Records)**
11 ***Heat Wave*** – Snail Mail (Matador)
12 *Won't Get Fooled Again* – **The Who (Track Record)**

LUNA LANDING

Run Out Groove's next limited-edition release will be Luna's covers collection *Lunafield*, after fans voted it as their No.1 choice. The 2LP set will be pressed on 180g coloured vinyl and is available to pre-order until 8 July, when it will be pressed and numbered based on total orders. "We recorded a whole lot of covers in the 1990s, it was a big part of what we did as a band, usually as we were finishing one of our albums – but you'd have to spend a lot of money on eBay to track down all those obscure B-sides on 7" or CD singles," says the band's singer and guitarist, Dean Wareham. The options for Run Out Groove's next release are Juliana Hatfield's *Only Everything*, *Bleecker & MacDougal* by Fred Neil and *Lonesome Country* by Billy Byrd. To get involved with Run Out Groove, visit www.runoutgroovevinyl.com.

Luna
LUNAFIED

Anna Mission

Singer-songwriter's new record and tour

Anna Calvi has announced details of her third album, *Hunter*, to be released on 31 August. The album will be backed by an extensive UK and Europe tour, which starts in September and concludes with a date at London's Roundhouse on 7 February. Virtuoso guitarist Calvi has shared the single *Don't Beat The Girl Out Of My Boy*, written about the tendency for male children to be taught not to cry or display their emotions. "It's a song about the defiance of happiness," says Calvi. "It's about being free to identify yourself in whichever way you please, without any restraints from society."

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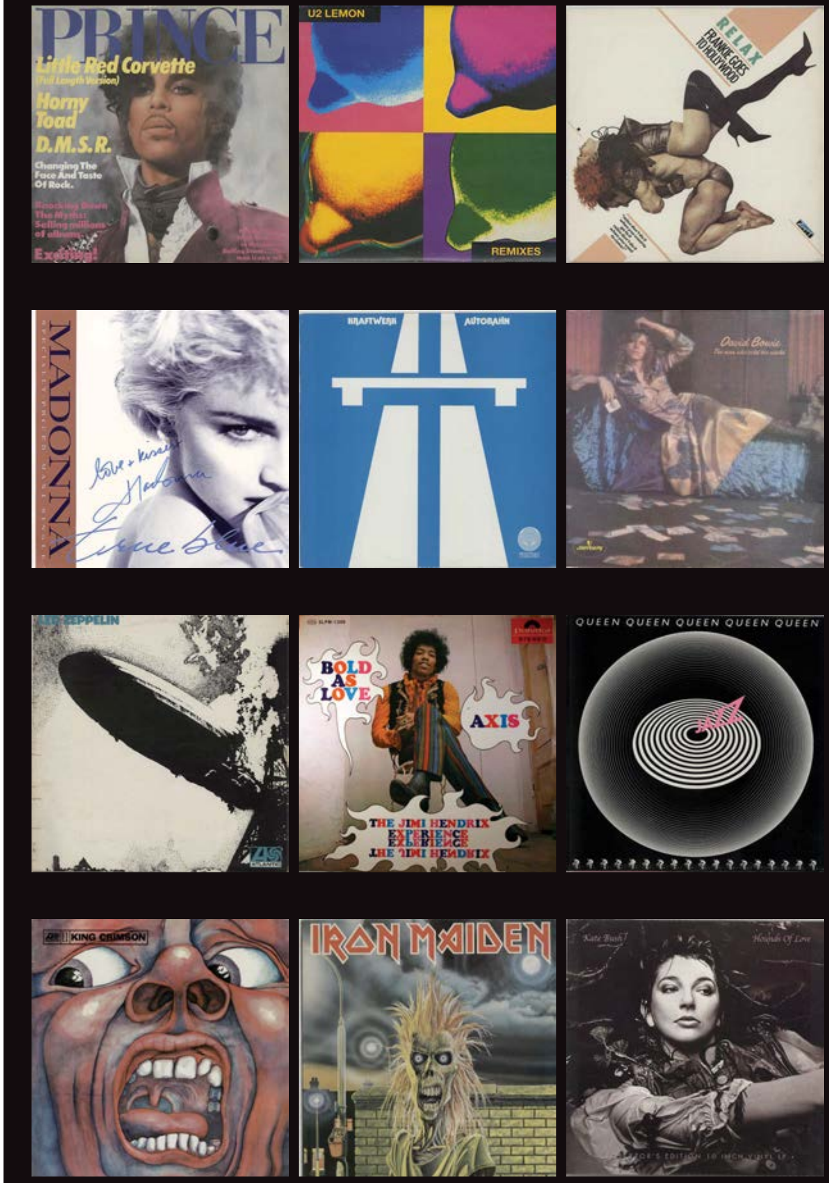

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INTERPOL
MARAUDER

More Interpol To Admire

Interpol return with their sixth album, *Marauder*, next month. Recorded at Yeah Yeah Yeahs' Manhattan rehearsal space and in producer Dave Fridmann's Tarbox Studios, it's the New York band's first release since 2014's *El Pintor*, and due out on 24 August. *Long Live Vinyl*'s appetite was duly whetted by lead single *The Rover*, which features all of the band's trademarks – ice-cool lead guitar lines, insistent drumming and Paul Banks' ever-mesmeric vocals, drenched in reverb.

UNBRIDLED JOY

Bristol punk five-piece Idles have announced details of their second album, *Joy As An Act Of Resistance*, due for release on 31 August through Partisan Records. Produced by Space, the follow-up to 2017's *Brutalism* was teased with the pro-immigration single *Danny Nedelko*. Says singer Joe Talbot: "This album is an attempt to be vulnerable to our audience and to encourage vulnerability; a brave, naked smile in this shitty new world."

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DISCOGRAPHY

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Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark

O.M.D.

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£150

PEARL JAM

TEN

Rare original 1992 UK Epic label limited edition 11-track vinyl LP 'basketball' Picture Disc, housed in a special printed PVC sleeve with colour card back insert. #4688840.

£150

MADONNA

EVERYBODY

Rare debut UK 12" also including the Dub Version. This was her first United Kingdom-issued single from December 1982 and was not released in a picture sleeve, only a Warner company black-and-white striped '12" Single' die-cut sleeve. W9899T. £250

FALSE HEADS

This exciting punk-inspired London trio are working-class heroes of the future

The 70s, 80s and 90s saw some of our most beloved artists coming from humble backgrounds – Pixies, Nirvana, Joy Division and the Happy Mondays, to name a few. Today, many bands are from far more affluent financial circumstances, as they're often the ones who can afford to pursue music as a career. The result? A paucity of artists from more modest backgrounds to tackle the issues facing the majority of listeners, in the tradition of icons from past generations.

Yet False Heads are potential heirs to The Clash, the Sex Pistols and even Green Day, updating the anger and frustration of classic punk for everyday people in a similarly ferocious style. "All of our parents are working class," notes lead singer, guitarist and lyricist Luke Griffiths. "Like a lot of people, my mom and dad moved out of grim areas in council estates to the outskirts of East London, in order to try and give their kids a better life, allow them to be brought up in a better area. So there has always been a mix of values and conflicting ideas, between this conservative middle-class suburbia they found themselves in and their roots."

Growing up, this conflict often left all three band members – Griffiths, drummer/singer Barney Nash and bassist Jake Elliott – feeling "lost, like we didn't fit in, isolated". The contrast between environment and values has become even more striking, as the group have all had to take up the very same "working class jobs" their parents tried to escape in order to support the band. However, this has provided the group with "a unique outlook and perspective" on trying to balance a creative career and financial survival.

This is reflected in the band's music: most recently, the Iggy Pop-approved single, *Retina*, which they put out on red vinyl. Griffiths says the current climate provides plenty of inspirational fodder: "There are a lot of politically charged bands, which is a good thing. We live in an extremely morally grey world at the minute; people are forcing black-and-white viewpoints, and not providing any room for honest, open dialogue."

The band's commitment to positive change is reflected in their work with the Nick Alexander Memorial Trust (NAMT), a non-profit organisation set up by Nick's sister, Zoe. "Zoe's brother was horrendously murdered at the Bataclan [in 2015] by theocratic and religious fascists. NAMT is an incredible charity which heals people through music: they get musical equipment to people who are disabled mentally or physically, and bring instruments to poorer schools." The band are contributing £3 from every T-shirt they sell to NAMT. "NAMT and Zoe are amazing," says Griffiths. "We just want to help out."

Catch False Heads on tour this Autumn. To buy a copy of Retina, or get a T-shirt to support the Nick Alexander Memorial Trust, go to falseheads.bigcartel.com. ●

Jennifer Otter Bickerdike

IAN PEEL'S LINER NOTES

If you were stranded on a desert island and could have only one vinyl format, which would you choose? A crate of jukebox 7"s, or maybe a stack of gatefold-sleeved prog double albums? For our columnist, there's only one winner

Personally, I could answer the above question in a heartbeat. For my desert-island discs, I'd carry ashore as many 12" singles as I could hold. Almost 10 years ago, I set out to celebrate the 12" as an artform with a compilation series called, aptly enough, *The Art Of The 12"*. Back then, the vinyl revival hadn't yet taken hold – so, to begin with, the series was about celebrating the 12" across two CDs, albeit in a six-panel Digipak with a 32-page booklet.

Subtitled "A celebration of the extended remix, for the footsteps and heartbeats of the connoisseur," *Volume One* included all the tropes I loved about 12" vinyl, not just the extended remixes. There were hidden messages all over the artwork, on the spine and on the actual CDs. And while there were 12" versions of big hits, I realised quite early on that one 10-minute mix after another wouldn't make for an album (or rather a pair of CDs) that you could sit back and listen to, full-length.

> ***Almost 10 years ago, I set out to celebrate the 12" as an artform with a compilation series called, aptly enough, The Art Of The 12"***

So after an opening salvo of the most bombastic 12" mixes of the mid 80s – the Young Person's Guide To The 12" mix of Frankie's *Rage Hard* and the Extended, For Stephanie Beacham mix of Act's *Snobbery & Decay* – I added the one-minute version of Art Of Noise's *Moments In Love* (titled, appropriately enough, *Moment In Love*), because a remix doesn't necessarily have to be a lengthier version. Where there's high technology, I figured, there can also be nanotechnology.

Other mini-mixes were included across the series and, by the time I got to *Volume Three*, which had a soundtracks theme, there were plenty of choices for interludes, as I could delve into the world of tracks that had been remixed for TV themes. Which led to the first-ever appearance on CD (I think) of Trevor Horn's version of Jeff Beck's *Star Cycle*, the opening theme to the second series of *The Tube*.

But it was *Volume Two* where the gems really came to light. When the master tapes were delivered for the 12" Dub Version of Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark's *Julia's Song*, it contained two tracks: the vocal and the instrumental dub, each one four minutes long, which appeared together on the B-side to *Talking Loud And Clear*. I was tempted to call Virgin Records and say I'd only asked for the vocal version, but decided to bite my tongue and include them both as one eight-minute track (with a pause in the middle).

And when the audio for the 12" mix of Paul McCartney's *Spies Like Us* arrived, I was gobsmacked. It was 5:26 long, but the original vinyl release was 3:58. It turned out that when the original record was pressed, they inadvertently cut the track short, shaving off a wonderful minute-and-a-half's worth of intro and build-up. So, if nothing else, we can thank *The Art Of The 12"* for bringing some previously unreleased McCartney music to the world. ●

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KEF Q350, What Hi-Fi? November 2017

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CRATE DIGGING WITH... Franz Ferdinand

Franz Ferdinand are currently touring sixth album, *Always Ascending*, but drummer Paul Thomson took time out to head off on a crate-digging session with us. Is he committed to vinyl? "Yes, it was a Spotify algorithm that brought Ellen Arkbro's *Mountain Of Air* to my attention," he says, "but I did the decent thing and bought the record..."

FOR ORGAN AND BRASS
ELLEN ARKBRO

ELLEN ARKBRO

MOUNTAIN OF AIR

"Weirdly unsettling and simultaneously comforting, it's a piece performed on a 393-year-old organ tuned to meantone temperament, which apparently was the tuning system of its day."

ÁINE O'DWYER

MUSIC FOR CHURCH CLEANERS

"It's performed and recorded on the organ in St Mark's Church in Islington while the cleaners are in. So the sound of vacuum cleaners and chatter becomes part of the performance."

BALTIMORE
BREAK BEAT
RECORDS
TECHNOSIS
SIDE 1
A. "CHANGE POSITIONS"
B. B TRACK
C. BONUS BEAT #1

TECHNOSIS

CHANGE POSITIONS

"This was briefly given props by M.I.A. on a mixtape, and DJ Ben UFO has been known to drop the track, which is made up of a loop from *Moments In Love* by Art Of Noise along with a shady vocal sample."

PUSSY GALORE

PUSSY GALORE

PENETRATION IN THE CENTREFOLD

"When I was 17, I went on a trip with my art class; the highlight was visiting Rough Trade in Covent Garden. I bought the most abrasive thing I could find; a live Pussy Galore bootleg."

Del
Both Sides of the Brain

DEL THA FUNKY HOMOSAPIEN

BOTH SIDES OF THE BRAIN

"I haven't heard this since it came out. Always thought he was very underrated as an MC, although the Gorillaz spots have probably helped bring him to a wider audience."

REINFORCED
4 HERO
COMBAT DANCIN'
LIMITED EDITION EP
1. COMBAT DANCE
2. MR. KIRK'S NIGHTMARE
3. ANOTHER WEEKEND

4HERO

MR KIRK'S NIGHTMARE

"I first heard this on pirate radio driving around Walthamstow at the tail end of the Second Summer Of Love. By this point, the dream had soured and the records started getting darker, eventually morphing into jungle..."

EIFFEL 65
Blue (Da Ba Dee)
Republic

EIFFEL 65

BLUE (DA BA DEE)

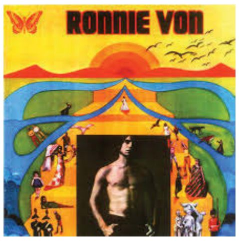
"I first heard this on the radio on a coach on a 13th Note day out in 1999. 13th Note was a bar that employed Alex [Kapranos] and myself as bartenders, as well as just about everyone of our age group, it seemed..."

art ensemble of chicago
a.a.c.m. great black music
message to our folks
actuel
28

ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO

MESSAGE TO OUR FOLKS

"Late-60s spiritual, woke jazz is my jam: Pharoah Sanders, Alice Coltrane and Art Ensemble, which was wild and for the most part melodic, but had a groove and was percussive."



RONNIE VON

ANARQUIA

"A Brazilian psychedelic record from 1969. Ronnie Von is a name I've never seen mentioned in the same breath as artists like Os Mutantes or Gal Costa, but he must've had some connection to the Tropicália movement?"

ZZ TOP
Sharp Dressed Man

ZZ TOP

SHARP DRESSED MAN

"The best-sounding modern rock record ever. Alex and I still absolutely lose our minds enthusing about it, it hasn't dated at all – unlike records that followed it, where they tried to utilise the latest recording tech." ●

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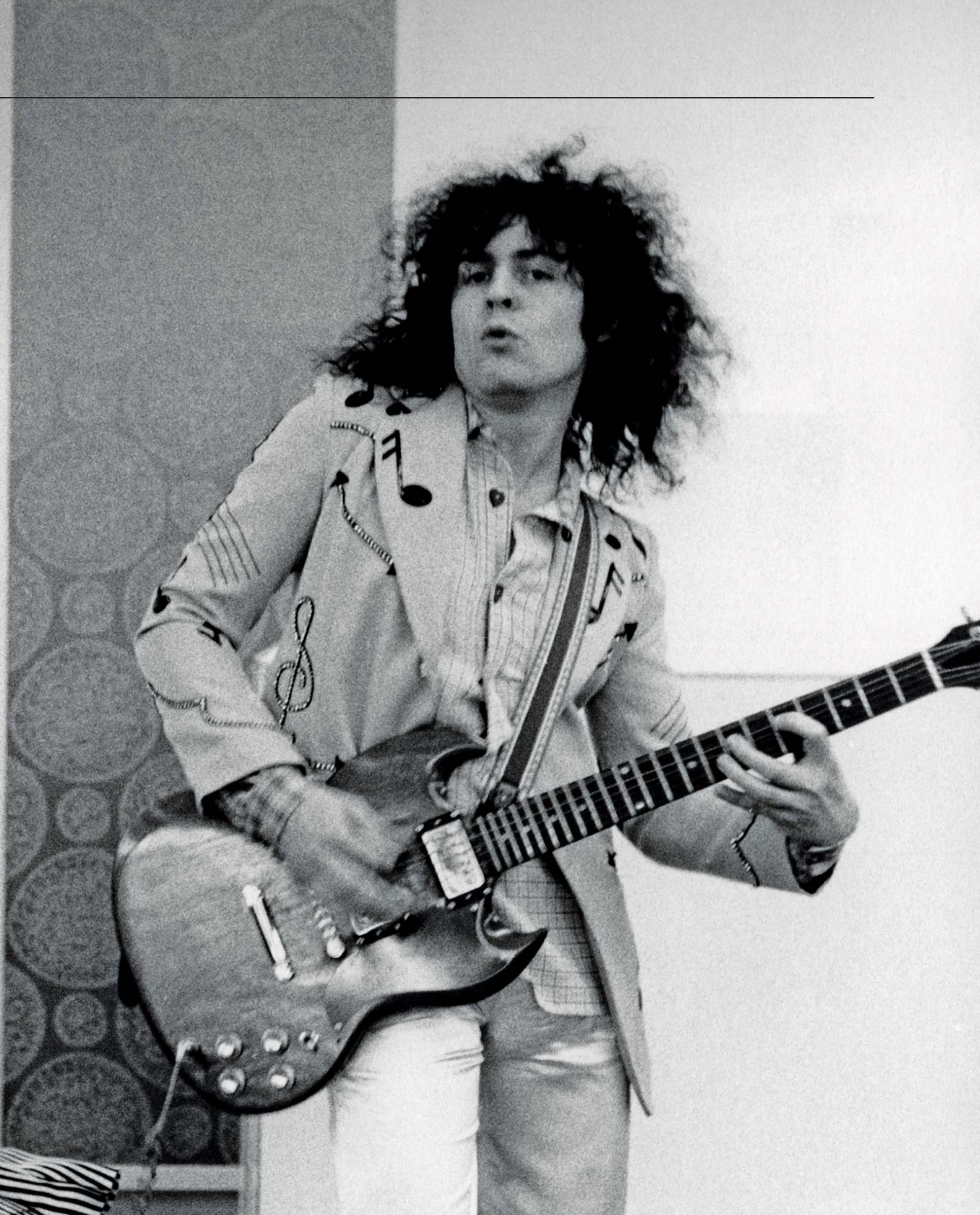
STUDIO SNAPSHOT

ELTON JOHN AND MARC BOLAN

March 1972

This shot was taken during the filming of the 1972 Apple Films movie, *Born To Boogie*. The Ringo Starr-directed documentary, aimed at teenagers and designed to surf the wave of 'T. Rexstasy' sweeping the country at the time, embellished the band's concert at Wembley Empire Pool by interspersing in-studio sequences and whimsical, surreal *Magical Mystery Tour*-style fantasy skits. The film's studio footage sees Marc Bolan and Elton John joined by Ringo, on a second kit, jamming on Bolan compositions *Children Of The Revolution* and *The Slider*. The UK premiere of the film, in Soho in December 1972, was attended by T. Rex, Ringo Starr and Elton John.



WHY I LOVE...

Appetite For Destruction
Guns N' Roses

ROMEO STODART

The Magic Numbers' singer and guitarist tells *Why Vinyl Matters* author **Jennifer Otter Bickerdike** about his first vinyl love – and how the LP he obsessed over helped define the spirit of his band...

"My first vinyl memory actually was in Trinidad And Tobago in the Caribbean, where my sister (fellow Magic Numbers member Michele Stodart) and I grew up. I went halves with a friend on buying *Appetite For Destruction* by Guns N' Roses. That was the first record I ever purchased; we used to share it. For me, music doesn't really exist unless it's on vinyl. As a band, we've always done every single on 7". But my initial introduction to rock 'n' roll was through Guns N' Roses and other heavy metal that was shown on a speciality show on MTV, called *Headbangers Ball*.

"At the time, there was mainly just reggae around (though my uncle was into country), so I really wasn't exposed to anything other than that for the first part of my life. I remember going around to this friend's house one day, and he somehow had access to this new show I'd never seen. I was about 10 or 11 years old. We just sat there in awe. There were a bunch of videos from all different bands; but then Guns N' Roses came on with *Sweet Child O' Mine*. We were like: 'What the hell is this?'."

GUNS N' ROSES
APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION

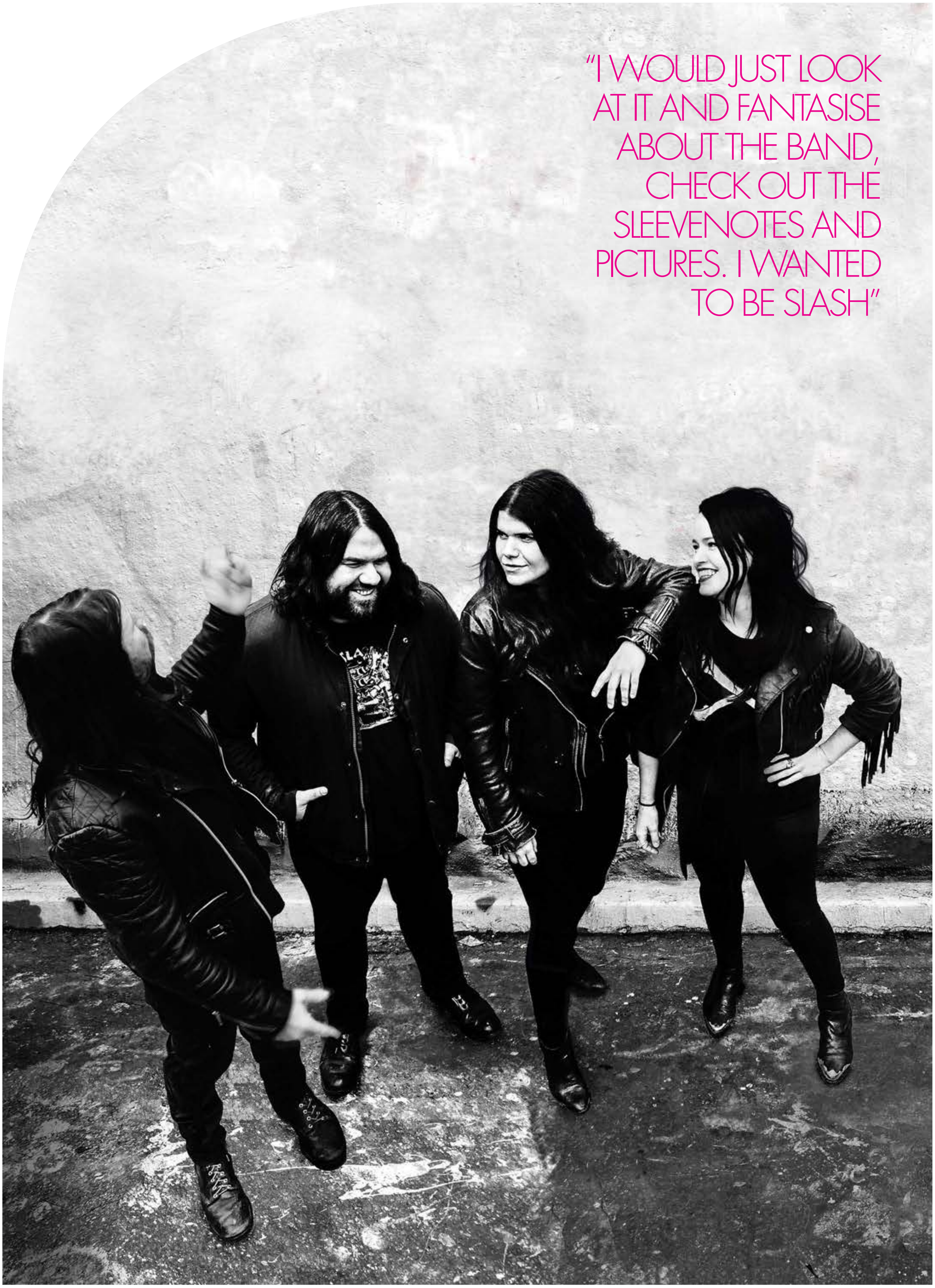
SWEET RECORD O' MINE

"We became desperate to get hold of our own copies of the LP. I think my friend finally found it being sold in this little record store – rock records seemed kind of a rare thing then. We went into the shop, wanting to each take one home. Between the two of us, I think we had just the right amount of money for a copy, so we went in on it together; it was pretty expensive, a big purchase for two kids. We would each have it for a couple days, then swap over. In the end, I just made a cassette for him and said: 'Go on your way, I'm keeping the vinyl!'. But in the beginning, sometimes he would have the actual record, I would just have the sleeve. I would just look at it and fantasise about the band, check out the sleevenotes and pictures. I wanted to be Slash.

"The front cover was actually pretty naughty. I grew up in a religious home – we were raised Catholic – and because of the cross and the skulls on the front, my parents were like: 'What kind of thing is this? Is this satanic?'. I was like: 'No, that's to come, mum', as I was getting into Slayer and Napalm Death and Cannibal Corpse and all those metal bands. I still love those records, especially Guns N' Roses, to this day.

"Honestly, if you were on our tourbus or in the van going around with us, I guarantee you we will be cranking G N' R. That period of music is honestly in our DNA; that rock 'n' roll gang spirit. In a mad way, we still carry that on within the group." ●

The Magic Numbers' latest album, Outsiders, is out now on Role Play



> "I WOULD JUST LOOK AT IT AND FANTASISE ABOUT THE BAND, CHECK OUT THE SLEEVENOTES AND PICTURES. I WANTED TO BE SLASH"

Niamh Murray

MY LIFE IN VINYL

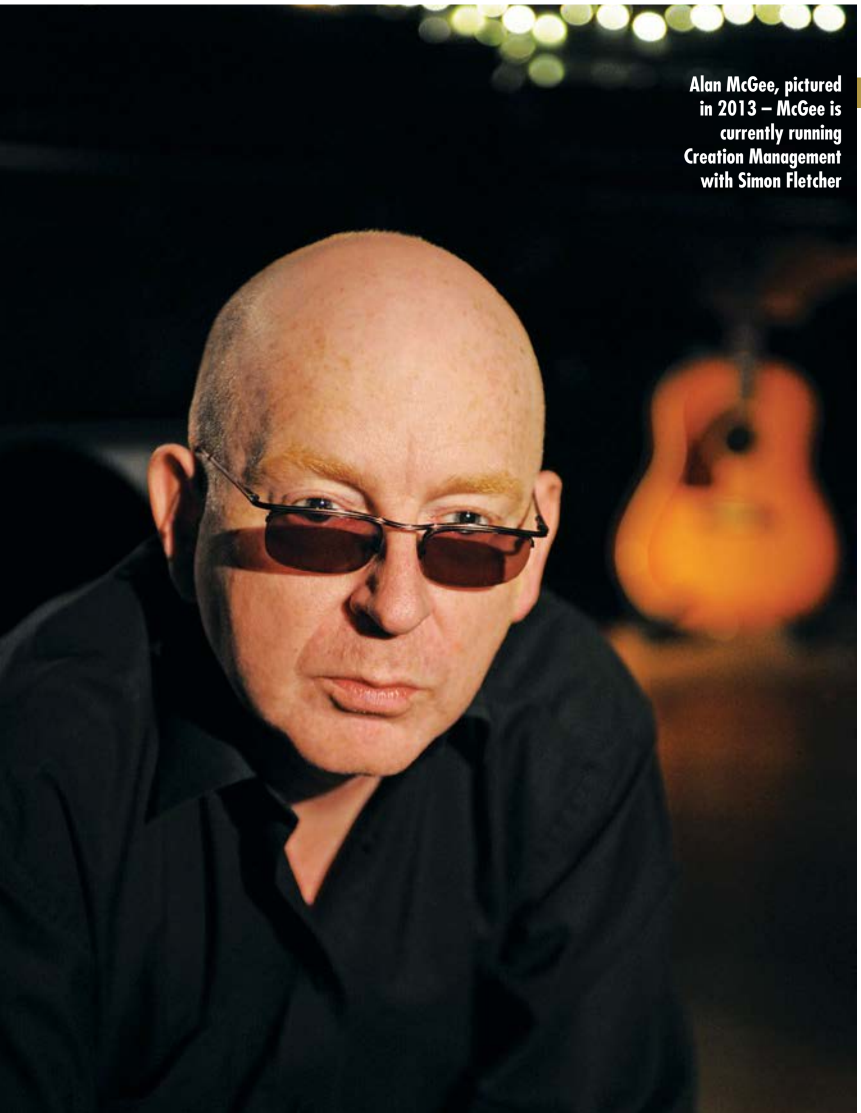
ALAN MCGEE

The legendary Creation founder, who worked with My Bloody Valentine, Ride and Primal Scream before discovering Oasis and managing The Libertines, gives **Ben Wardle** the inside track on 12 albums that have shaped his career in music…

So much more than 'the man who discovered Oasis', Alan McGee is a record-business groundbreaker. He sits at the top table along with game-changing A&R legends such as Island's Chris Blackwell, Interscope's Jimmy Iovine, and the late Ahmet Ertegun who set up Atlantic Records in 1947. Like them, McGee combines visionary ability to spot talent with a streetwise, no-nonsense business sense.

From its humble beginnings with singles by McGee's own band, Biff Bang Pow!, to orchestrating the fusion of rock and dance with Primal Scream, to seeing him shaking hands with the Prime Minister, McGee's 'bedroom' label Creation Records' rise, as well as his parallel career as a music manager, have been well documented in books and on film.

When we speak to him, McGee is in buoyant form – enjoying managing his current roster, which includes Black Grape, The Bluetones and Cast. Amazingly, he no longer owns any vinyl, preferring to stream all his music, but he was happy to sift through the virtual tower of records he's been involved with in his four decades in the business, and pick out the ones which best tell his story.



Alan McGee, pictured in 2013 – McGee is currently running Creation Management with Simon Fletcher

Alamy

FELT

FOREVER BREATHES THE LONELY WORD

Creation
September 1986

"I've rediscovered Felt this year. I stopped Creation Records 18-plus years ago and I hadn't played any Felt since, but this Christmas in Wales I played some and my 17-year-old daughter, who has got great taste, said: 'What's this, dad? I like this one'. We put out four albums by Lawrence [Felt's mononymous mainstay], but this is truly the best one. I'd been friends with Lawrence since 1984. I was 23 and he was 21, and he was a big star to me and Bobby Gillespie and people like that. In 1985, he left Cherry Red and said he wanted to be on Creation. We couldn't believe it! We were a bedroom label and he'd been on an actual record company. "It was the equivalent of being this little dude and getting a really elegant woman to go out with you! Cherry Red was probably what Creation was trying to be… I loved [Cherry Red A&R] Mike Alway… I wanted to be like them more than Rough Trade. The album was incredibly well received… If I was starting a label now and we put that out, it would still be heralded as a great record."

Alan's Choice
All The People I Like Are Those That Are Dead

THE HOUSE OF LOVE
THE HOUSE OF LOVE

Creation
June 1988

"[First single] *Shine On* had got a little bit of traction, but nobody was interested in *Real Animal*. We nearly went bankrupt around the time. My wife had left me, I had around 12 grand left in the bank and I spent it all on mixing the House Of Love record with Pat Collier. We made a fucking amazing record: I thought it was going to do okay, but I didn't see it really going. Then *Christine* came out and everybody went: 'This is fucking amazing!'. Jeff Barrett did a great job on press and it blew up. It sold 100,000 copies. Then we did *Destroy The Heart*, and after that it was a major-label feeding frenzy. If Terry Bickers hadn't left, I believe they might've got there and become an absolutely huge band: they were good enough. The fatal flaw was Guy Chadwick, because he was bonkers. He was a very grounded guy, a brilliant writer, but he shouldn't have done drugs…"

Alan's Choice
Man To Child

RIDE
NOWHERE

Creation
October 1990

"I was in the East West office with Richard Norris from The Grid [Alan managed Norris] and the A&R guy, Cally, played Ride and it was phenomenal. He said he didn't know if they were going to sign to East West, so we arranged a meeting with them. I don't think they could understand anything I said at first! We signed them and made them famous, but they ended up signing to Sire for the rest of the world! Ride were like the way [the record business] should be: they record, the record's out three months later, everyone makes a profit, they go back in the studio… It was really good. *Nowhere* sold 100,000 copies really fast, so that created a lot of income for the label.

"We never used to put bands on the cover of our records – because I'd been a musician, I liked obscure thought processes…"

Alan's Choice
Seagull

SLOWDIVE
JUST FOR A DAY

Creation
September 1991

"What's interesting about this band is that on the first album, they were untrendy; the second album, nobody gave a fuck and the third album, you couldn't give it away. But 20 years later, in 2014, they come back and they're headlining to 20,000 people at Primavera [huge Barcelona festival]. That's the power of music!

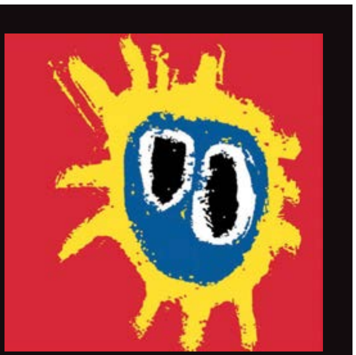
slowdive
just for a day

"They were fans of House Of Love and Ride. We were breaking a lot of these kind of bands and they jumped on it. I showed up at a pub in Windsor and then we put out the first single. I think they were misjudged back in the day. Back then, it wasn't cool to be middle-class, not like now where it's really difficult to be working-class in music! And Slowdive were middle-class, nice kids. But they were a great band. I'm not sure I really got it, like the kids now really get it. Now they're a career band – not a band who come back once a year and play The Garage; they're on tour, all round the world, all year!"

Alan's Choice
Brighter

PRIMAL SCREAM
SCREAMADELICA

Creation
September 1991



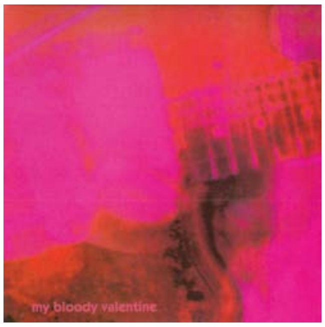
"Before Primal Scream got to *Loaded*, they were on their arse. Nobody wanted to know them. Nobody gave a fuck. You couldn't get them arrested – and we tried! But within a year of putting *Loaded* out, they became arguably one of the biggest groups in Britain. I met Andy Weatherall [producer of lead single *Loaded* and arguably the catalyst who made Primal Scream successful] with Bobby and Jeff Barrett at a *Boy's Own* do in Brighton in summer 1989. He was wearing a Factory Records T-shirt with 'Touched By The Hand Of God' on it. The album was put together like a jigsaw, which is probably why it's such a great record – every session was a thing in itself. We'd had the hit with *Loaded*, so we went in to do *Come Together*, but the Farley Mix was wrong and the Weatherall Mix with Jesse Jackson on it was great, but Bobby wasn't singing on it again. So Bobby left the band! I had to keep the band together, so I phoned up Farley and said: 'Put Bobby back in the fuckin' mix!'… When we put out the album, there was no reason to see [success] coming. But in the first three days, we went silver – we ran out of records! If we'd made enough, we'd've had a No. 1! I gave Paul Cannell [the late artist who designed all of Primal Scream's cover art] the upstairs of our Hackney office to do his painting – that says a lot about the times! I remember the original *Screamadelica* artwork was for a club flyer, but in blue. We didn't have a sleeve and Bobby wanted it to be like the MC5. I remember thinking, 'that's him reverting back to the 1960s again'. So we put that and the flyer and some other ideas around it… Bobby chose the flyer, but he said: 'I want it in red'."

Alan's Choice
Higher Than The Sun

▶

MY BLOODY VALENTINE
LOVELESS

Creation
November 1991



"It came out six weeks after *Screamadelica* and two weeks before [Teenage Fanclub's] *Bandwagonesque*. We were going bankrupt – we needed to put records out!

"I was obsessed about MBV. One of the great things about Creation in that period in 1989 and 1990 was that I was so obsessed with the Valentines that I started signing all the bands who sounded like them! So I signed Slowdive, Ride, Moonshake and Adorable, who were all really into the Valentines! As I've got older, I realise I've got a really obsessive nature; luckily, I was obsessed with the right band!

"[Getting it made] was a bittersweet thing, a nightmare, really… It cost £270K, which was a lot back in the day. But it was brilliant when we got the record; it was a really great album, but I couldn't really enjoy it at the time. It did pretty well for an album that noisy.

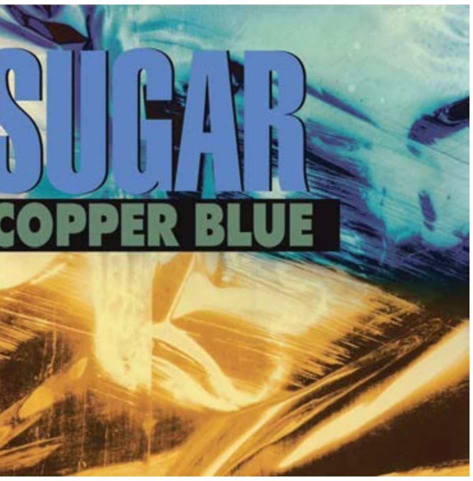
"Kevin Shields was really fucking with the listener at the point: he sent me *To Here Knows When* and it sounded like [does a pretty good rendition of a swirling ocean], so I said to him: 'I think you've sent me a bad cassette copy'. And he was like: 'You don't get it!'.

Alan's Choice
To Here Knows When

SUGAR
COPPER BLUE

Creation
September 1992

"Bob Mould had put out two solo albums on Virgin, which hadn't sold, but I was a fan of Hüsker Dü. *Loveless* had happened and he loved that album, so he came to my office. Because he'd been on Virgin, he'd been getting big advances, but I offered him 10K. We argued about it for months and eventually, he realised I wasn't going to move… I'm so glad we did it, but why we got the deal was because I didn't really care whether we got it or not! We were killing it at the time with the Fanclub, Ride, Boo Radleys… When we put *Copper Blue* out, it went in at No. 9. It's a fantastic record, but that was a shocker; I don't think Bob had ever been in the British charts. Andy Saunders [press officer] played a blinder, he was getting front covers everywhere. Bob was due a bit of a roll because Kurt Cobain was really influenced by Hüsker Dü."



Alan's Choice
Hoover Dam

Photoshot

(WHAT'S THE STORY) MORNING GLORY ?
oasis

OASIS
(WHAT'S THE STORY) MORNING GLORY?

Creation
October 1995

"They were a monumental band. It all fucking collided at one moment; it was their destiny, it was my destiny. Was I particularly amazing at doing it? No, but shit fucking went down; I was there, they were there. Caroline Elleray [head of A&R, Universal Music Publishing] just told me this – no one knows this story! In the 90s, she used to work at a rehearsal studio in Manchester and she did an A&R showcase with Oasis that loads of A&R went to, including Jonathan Dickins [then A&R at Warners, now Adele's manager] and they all passed!

"The only person who knew what was going on was Noel because he was writing the songs. I never thought we'd do seven or eight million *Definitely Maybes*; never saw it. And when I first heard *Wonderwall* and *Don't Look Back In Anger* in April '95, I did think they were great, but I never thought we'd sell 23 million! [The press] didn't have a clue. Oasis were the antithesis of what the kind of studenty people who wrote for the music papers back then were into: Oasis were stoners from Burnage and these guys were happier with the Manic Street Preachers talking about the politics of politics…

"It helped break Oasis when Damon decided to move the [*Country House* single] release date. Blur were so much bigger than Oasis – they'd sold two million *Parklifes* and we'd done just half a million *Definitely Maybes*. It was unbelievable to be on the national news."

Alan's Choice *Wonderwall*

SUPER FURRY ANIMALS
FUZZY LOGIC

Creation
May 1996

"It was Mark Bowen's signing [Creation A&R man, who went on to set up Wichita] – he spotted it. He was on it from Day One, and really in with them. On the night they played, I had a hot date with somebody and I had to blow it out to go to the fucking Camden Falcon with Mark to see them. And I had to stand and watch Pearl Lowe's band Powder… Then SFA played and they had great tunes. Mark took me backstage and they were all sitting there with spliffs hanging out of their mouths. We demo'd *Something For The Weekend* and it sounded like a Blur song to me, so we signed them off the back of that. They were a great signing, because nobody expected Creation to sign a bunch of opinionated Welsh anarchists. It was good! I was responsible for *The Man Don't Give A Fuck* being their big song because that was going to be a B-side. Mark and Dick [Green, Alan's partner in Creation] put it on a 12" as an extra track. They didn't see it for what it was, but I heard it and six weeks before release date, said: 'Fuck off! That's the single, put that out!'. And it went Top 20, and it's still their biggest song!"

Alan's Choice
Something For The Weekend

SUPER FURRY ANIMALS
FUZZY LOGIC

poptones proudly presents
THE HIVES
your new favourite band

THE HIVES
YOUR NEW FAVOURITE BAND

Poptones
October 2001

"We did put out some good stuff on Poptones [Alan's label founded in 1999 after Creation's dissolution], like The Hives, The BellRays, Cosmic Rough Riders – but nobody wants to remember it! I saw The Hives on TV in Germany when I was doing promo for Poptones. We licensed the first two albums and we chose the best songs and came up with *Your New Favourite Band*. We'd done that for Cosmic Rough Riders, which sold 100,000 albums. This did even better."

Alan's Choice
Supply And Demand

Edward Ball
Trailblaze
the new single
9.9.96
RED CARD

Alan in the Creation Records offices in 1997

Alamy

THE LIBERTINES
THE LIBERTINES

Rough Trade
August 2004

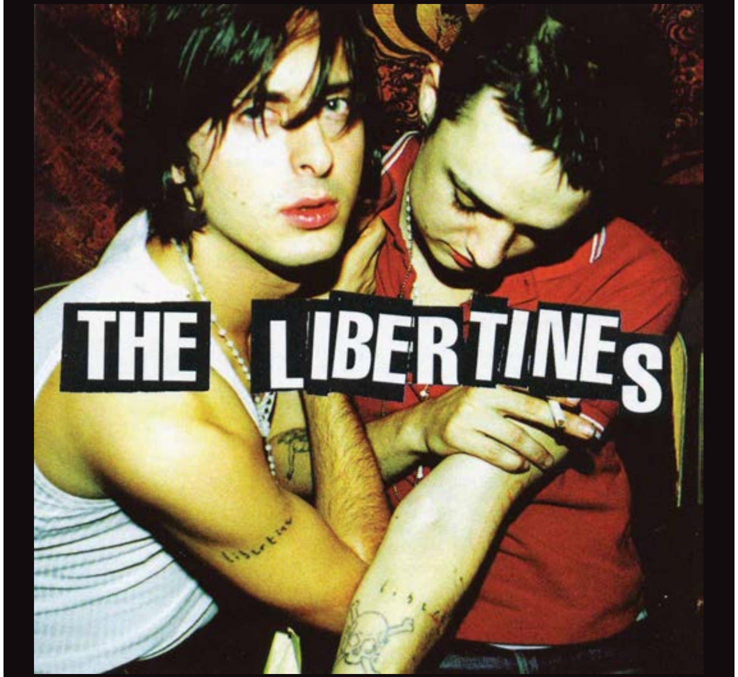
"The previous manager resigned in 2003. Don't blame her! So James Endeacott [Rough Trade A&R man] decided that I was the only person who could mend Pete and Carl's relationship, because Pete had burgled Carl's house. So I went down to see Pete at his sister's in Catford. We went to the pub and he says to me: 'Who's your favourite band?', and I told him The Beatles, so he says: 'Go and put five records on'. So I put on *Hello, Goodbye*, you know. Then I asked him who his favourite band was and he said: 'Chas & Dave', and he put five of their records on. He'd missed three probation periods, so I said: 'You're going to go down', and he said: 'No, I'm not'. I went away thinking he was a nice guy, but not thinking very much about it. And then he went to prison.

"After that, I went to America for a couple of months and while I was in New York, I get a phone call from Endeacott, who says: 'He's out! We're doing a comeback!'. I was totally indignant that he'd phoned me up to try to get me to come back to the UK! But a week or so later, I was back and they appointed me as manager. They were already cult-big but we got them bigger; we didn't break them with records, we broke them with gigs. We put three Forums on sale and we sold them. Then the next day, we put three Brixtons on sale. And they sold, too. That was April 2004.

"After that, we put out *Can't Stand Me Now* and it exploded. We sold a million records. While they were making the record, my role as manager was the same as it was at a record company – Pete didn't want to give us the best songs… I think he was already thinking of Babyshambles… But we got *The Man Who Would Be King*, *Music When The Lights Go Out* and *Can't Stand Me Now*. The only one we never got on the album was *Hooligans On E*.

"The irony was there was so much heroin going on during the record, but Rough Trade said the band were eating too much food! I know! The band were racking up £200-a-day food bills while they were mixing at Island Studios. Rough Trade complained they wanted a discount on what we were eating! Never mind all the heroin and crack being done in the toilet!"

Alan's Choice
Can't Stand Me Now



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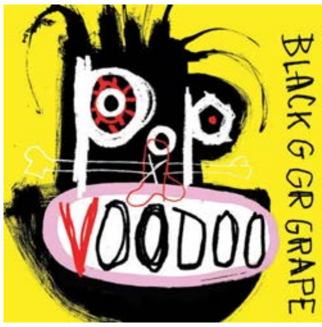
FOUR LIONS
We are England
BMG
FOUR LIONS
Shaun Ryder and McGee in London in 2016



BLACK GRAPE
POP VOODOO

UMC
July 2017

"I genuinely think that Shaun has been the best lyricist in Britain for the last 25 years. He's a poet [at this point, McGee recites from memory the opening verses from *Kinky Afro*]. Tony Wilson had it right – he's an unrecognised genius lyricist, just like Mark E Smith was.

"Johnny Chandler at Universal is a genius dude and he just offered us a deal for Black Grape out of the blue. So I sent Shaun with [producer] Youth off to Spain and literally 10 days later, they came back with 10 songs! I'll be honest with you, I was worried we were going to get it in the Top 40.

"I was fronting it out to Shaun that it was going to be okay, but I was worried. But Universal phoned me and said, you're not going to believe this and I thought, 'Uh-oh, we're going to be No. 72…' but they told us the midweek was No. 1 – we couldn't believe it. It was a weak chart, so we were No. 1 on 4,000 sales, but still…

"On the first track from the album, *Everything You Know Is Wrong*, we had to get an actor in to be Donald Trump, because Donald Trump's so mental he'd probably sue us for a million dollars!"

Alan's Choice
Nine Lives

FUTURE SOUNDS

As the conversation begins to wind down, we ask McGee if he's got plans for anything beyond management.

"It's never been more difficult for new music to take… And I don't think it's because I'm old, I think it's really, really tough now for new bands. You used to be able to go to the *NME* to find out what was going on. Now, the hardest thing is that there is nowhere to go to work out what the fuck's going on… Mind you, I might come back with a 7" label…" Watch this space. ●

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DEKONI AUDIO

PUBLIC ENEMY NO.1

John Lydon's next move after the Sex Pistols was a creative, musically varied experiment that's 40 years old and counting. **Sean Egan** finds out more…

In the late 90s, John Lydon found himself literally unable to record. Although his band Public Image Ltd had made several acclaimed and/or successful albums, his record company was neither willing to fund further recordings nor release him from his contract. "It's a conundrum," he shudders at his Kafka-esque dilemma. "You're in debt. They won't loan you the money to raise money against the debt. They won't help you record or tour, and if you raise money independently they claim it for their debt." It seemed the end of a career in which the former Johnny Rotten had both suffered for his art and, for some, prostituted himself on the back of it.

PiL – as Public Image stylised their acronym – was born in what Lydon calls a "period of great confusion". When, in early 1978, Lydon quit his role as Sex Pistols frontman, he was "left stranded in America without a plane ticket". Returning to the UK, he was soon enmeshed in a court case that left him penniless and nameless. "The management claimed they owned everything, including my name. That's why I had to revert to John Lydon. I would have carried on as Mr Rotten."

That Lydon would start a new band was fairly predetermined ("I'd got the bite for writing songs and I loved it"), but it would be one with different parameters. "In many ways, it was 'free thyself up young lad', because I knew there were some serious restrictions in the Pistols."

Lydon recruited beginner bassist Jah Wobble (John Wardle to his mum), mellifluous guitarist Keith Levene and Canadian student Jim Walker on drums. Though a peculiar line-up, Lydon says that their collective songwriting worked "instantaneously in rehearsal", explaining: "Unlike in the Pistols, this was real friends. This was an open house and free-form and fun… As for the lyric writing, I'm always writing. I'll springboard and hop on anything." Their very first song was *Public Image*, a sizzling putdown of the Pistols camp. "Absolutely perfect," says Lydon. "The words just flowed straight out of my mouth." Despite the joy Lydon was taking in his new setup, a certain chaos surrounded their debut-LP's recording process. "The record company wanted to pull the plug almost continuously," he reflects. "And they were still pushing for this Sex Pistols reunion thing."

Public Image became a Top 10 single in late 1978. The *First Issue* album, which followed in December, had much to recommend it, although perhaps not the maddeningly high bass levels. Powerful single *Death Disco* followed. "It was about my mother dying of a very painful stomach cancer, which tore me apart emotionally," explains Lydon. The group's second LP (1979) was *Metal Box*, aka *Second Edition*. "One journalist described it – and I loved it – as a slow-moving juggernaut of an album," notes Lydon. "I think that's fairly accurate." Others designated it a 'drone', an indication of its status as a love-it-or-loathe-it record. "That's really just true about everything," Lydon shrugs.

> "UNLIKE IN THE PISTOLS, PIL WAS… AN OPEN HOUSE AND FREE-FORM AND FUN"

FOUR ENCLOSED WALLS

The Flowers Of Romance (1981) was virtually creation-as-therapy, following Lydon's 1980 incarceration in Ireland on dubious assault charges. "I was frantic and work is always, for me, the answer to a problem." It was also virtually Lydon solo. Wobble had quit, new drummer Martin Atkins had quickly taken a leave of absence, and Levene – says Lydon – spent the sessions "on an Atari *Space Invaders* game… The chemicals were destroying his creativity." Lydon played "what I could and banged away on anything in sight", assisted by an unfinished Townhouse Studios in London, which "was like a dungeon of a castle with this amazing church ring coming off the stone". The caterwauling title track became an even more unlikely hit than *Death Disco*.

Only Atkins was retained for *This Is What You Want… This Is What You Get* (1984), an album Lydon asserts was made in "boracic" times. He says: "It was one take on anything… So it was just try to do the best I could. I found a poppy kind of music helped me."

PiL

The snaking single version of the title track, at least, was excellent. But less pleasingly, Lydon's weariness with his poverty manifested itself in performing Sex Pistols songs with a Holiday Inn band and charging artistes for the privilege of being his support act. He denies it was a sellout of the values he had espoused since the Pistols got their first press. "To assume I was doing any of this for money – really? Would have been very easy indeed to rest on those laurels and just make a career out of that, but I didn't."

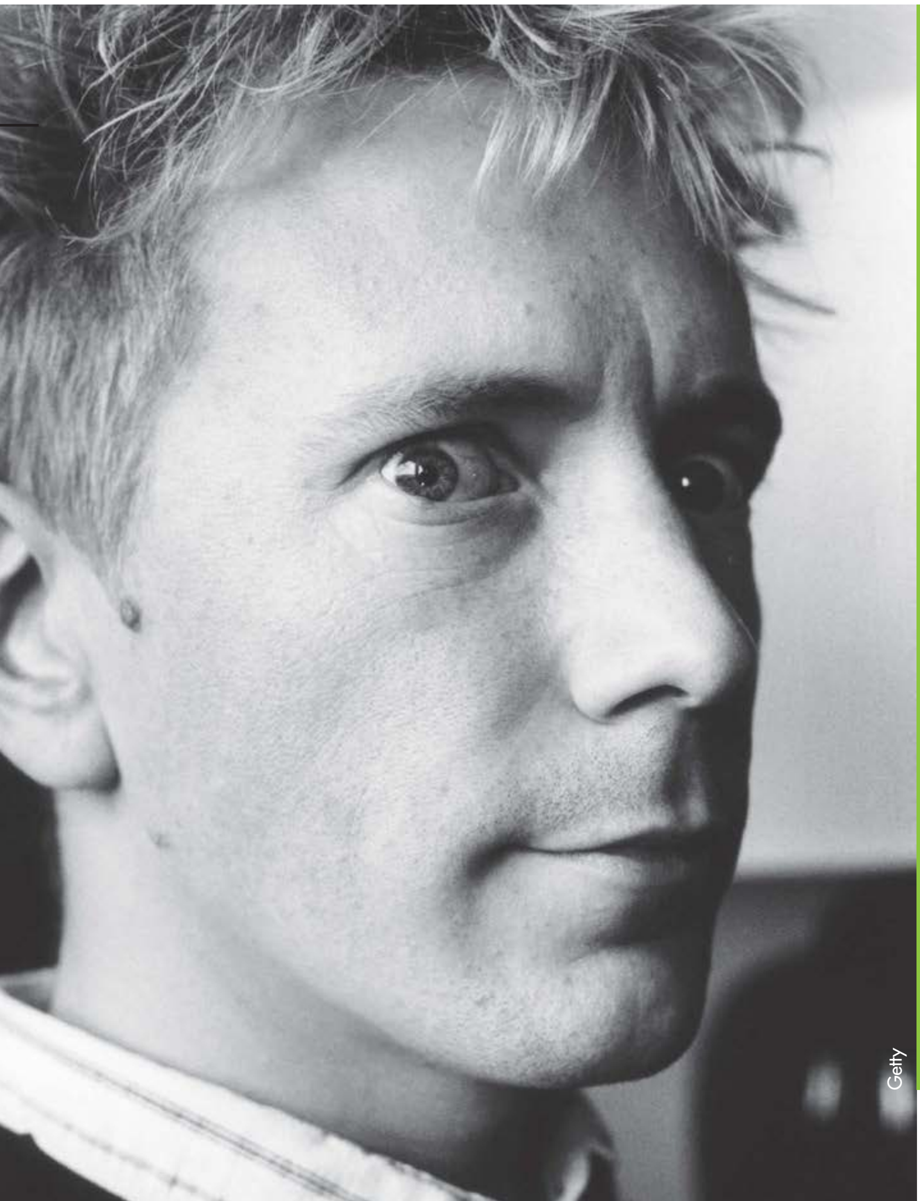
With the generically titled *Album* (1986), Lydon found a better balance between integrity and avarice, recruiting producer Bill Laswell and crack musicians such as Steve Vai and Ginger Baker to confer a mainstream sheen to his singular vision. "Somebody put some money down so that we could get the records done in a very tasty way. That's hard rock taken to the Nth degree. The support I got during that precise period gave me my soul back, really." The record span off the anti-apartheid hit *Rise*.

MILKING IT

The album nudged the UK Top 10, but *Happy?* (1987), *9* (1989) and *That What Is Not* (1992) found PiL settling into a niche in the lower parts of the Top 50. "I've never paid attention to chart positions," Lydon shrugs. "That's part of the reason people that work at record labels view me as hard to get on with or difficult. I'm very happy about that."

He was less happy about the 15 years in the wilderness that followed his 1997 solo album *Psycho's Path*, a period it could be argued that was an inevitable consequence of his contrariness. He filled time and his coffers with internet and TV broadcasts. He also took part in further Sex Pistols reunions following their original 1996 Filthy Lucre tour. Such ventures were rooted in the very nostalgia and former-glory basking punk had vehemently opposed, but Lydon did at least have the integrity to consistently resist the financial temptation to expand the project into recording activity: "I didn't wanna make no records. I told them that. I was never gonna go back on it."

Becoming the transcendentally unlikely face of Country Life butter in 2008 TV advertisements finally enabled him to escape his "conundrum" and revive the PiL brand for the group's first album in fully two decades. It appeared on his own label, PiL Official – appropriately enough, considering the group had once talked of itself as a company to rival ICI and referred to its members as directors. "I was very terrified of it just absolutely imploding," Lydon recalls, but, in fact, *This Is PiL* (2012) was well received. Even more happily, the following album – *What The World Needs Now…* (2015) – featured the same PiL line-up as its predecessor (Lydon, Lu Edmonds on guitar, Scott Firth on bass/keys and Bruce Smith



Getty

INFLUENCES

Lydon's musical diet is varied and eclectic

The first record John Lydon ever bought with his own money was, of course, er, *Ruby, Don't Take Your Love To Town* by Kenny Rogers. "I bought it because I loved the cover," he explains. "I was a young boy, easily impressed by colours."

Not that he needed to buy much when he was young. "My mum and dad were really avid record collectors," he recalls. Mr and Mrs Lydon of Holloway, North London were into "everything. Really, really exotic widespread tastes. Irish jigs with The Kinks all mixed up". Lydon's own influences always surprised journalists, who expected the figurehead of punk to cite nothing but the likes of The Stooges and The Velvet Underground. "They're all good and well, but there's more to life than just posing and a-posturing, isn't there?" he says. In the Pistols days, he publicly cited as primary loves stuff like Can, Van Der Graaf Generator and reggae, although seems surprised when it's put to him that they were quite radical tastes for a kid his age. "I didn't think so. That's just what I liked. And I'd throw Tangerine Dream in there. But there'd also be pop records. I love disco. Not the Bee Gees, funnily enough. Them I preferred before they went disco. God, I love their records. A whole host that are absolutely astounding." It's another unexpected Lydon passion, but he reasons: "I could put the Carpenters next to Iggy Pop quite happily. I see no reason for anybody to inflict a rulebook on me."

Public Image Ltd playing Glasgow in 2009 – PiL now tour to fund their next album: "a lovely little circle", says Lydon

> "I NEVER LOST THE LOVE FOR SEEING A STYLUS DROPPING ON A GROOVE"

on drums). "First time ever," Lydon laughs. "That's as I always would have wanted it to be. Once we found ourselves in a position of self-financing, all those old issues disappeared." These days, Lydon tours to raise the money to make the next PiL record: "That's now the lovely little circle that we're riding."

As well as his summer UK jaunt, Lydon is currently promoting a brace of PiL products to mark the 40th anniversary of a band that at one point seemed unlikely to see a third decade. The documentary *The Public Image Is Rotten*, he avers, is nothing so bland as the history of PiL through his eyes. "It's through many people's. There's a few enemies slung in there." He's very happy with the 5CD/2DVD/6LP boxset of the same title, with *Songs From The Heart* appended. "That's a serious body of work there and I'm quite, quite moved by that. A much more serious body of work than the Sex Pistols' 40-year celebration the year before."

RUDE HEALTH

When taken by Lydon through that body of work, it's tempting to become impatient with his casting of himself as the only wise man in a world of fools – until such time as discussion turns to his health, at which point, you can only admire him for his enduring cheerfulness. "I've always been a bit of a sick bunny," he reflects without self pity. The meningitis which wrecked much of his childhood continues to haunt him in the shape of steadily deteriorating eyesight. Worse, he reveals: "I found out recently I've got cataracts". A botched cataract operation which left his tour promoter with a permanently weeping eye resulted in Lydon deciding not to get his own eyes done. "I can't take the risk. We swap the sets about and I need to be able to see that in my songbook."

So how is he able to remain so cheerful? "Self pity is something my mum and dad well advised me against." In a closing quote one would never have imagined being provided by the former Johnny Rotten, he counsels, "Smile in the face of adversity." ●

BOX FRESH

Lydon's love of vinyl is reflected in PiL's releases

The first iteration of PiL's second album is an archetypal vinyl collector's item. Limited to 60,000 copies, *Metal Box* was housed in a tin emulating a film canister. Inside were three 12" 45rpm discs, one of which had a side with a locked groove, and all of which were fiendishly difficult to extract without touching the vinyl or dropping them. As such, mint copies are scarce. At the minimum, you should expect to part with £40 for the record.

Lydon is a vinyl lover. "That's where you get the most bass," he says. "If I have to settle for CDs, I do. When we release CDs, I make sure it's the absolute maximum quality I can get on the thing. It's a shame most manufacturers negate their responsibilities there and you have to watch them like hawks, because they'll just go for the cheapo version every single time. It's even worse if you listen to music off the internet. It's like a two-dimensional version of a three-dimensional image. The one thing that always seems to go is the bass. What a pity. That's me fave."

Lydon has fond memories of playing items from his parents' vast record collection. "[That] is really where I learned my love of records, being allowed to put the records on the Dansette," he reflects. "Never lost the love for that. I love to see a stylus dropping on a groove."

TOWER OF SONG

Jonathan Wright listens in as Gruff Rhys discusses his new album *Babelsberg*, an orchestral pop piece charting our edgy times…

At Kellys Records in Cardiff, a debate is taking place. Its subject is a white-label single unearthed in one of the store's bargain bins. It appears to be, Gruff Rhys and *Long Live Vinyl* helpfully point out, a Welsh-language version of *(I Never Promised You A) Rose Garden*, singer-songwriter Joe South's country standard and a huge 1970 hit for Lynn Anderson. Job done, mystery solved… except even in a store staffed by native speakers, where the combined knowledge of Welsh music is formidable, nobody has any clear idea about the identity of the singer.

Rhys, best known as the frontman of Super Furry Animals, looks at ease in this cratedigger's paradise, a spot where he played a DJ set on Record Store Day. Similarly, when we stop at Hard Lines, a coffee shop that also sells vinyl, Rhys chats with co-owner Matt. This part of Cardiff, home to atmospheric shopping arcades and close to the castle, is home territory.

But there are times when you need to leave the comforts of home behind, and Rhys is back in the game with a fine new solo album, *Babelsberg*. "It's probably one of the most unprocessed records I've ever made," he says. "There's some overdubbing, but it's quite a straight-up record, played by a simple live band – then an orchestra recorded on top of it…"

Clearly, this is a remark that needs some explaining: to do so, we need to go back to 2015 when Rhys adapted his 2007 solo album, *Candylion*, for the stage with a Christmas show aimed at children, *The Insatiable, Inflatable Candylion*. Having written new songs for the project, Rhys wanted to document what he was doing. He decamped to Bristol and producer Ali Chant's studio, Toybox, with a band consisting of ex-Flaming Lips drummer Kliph Scurlock, Stephen 'Sweet Baboo' Black and Osian Gwynedd. With Toybox set to close – which it eventually did in 2016, succumbing to what Chant calls the "inevitable march of gentrification" in the area – all concerned worked quickly.

"I saw it as an album," says Rhys, "but by coincidence, it was in a period when I didn't have a record deal or anything, so there was no plan for it." In the meantime, Rhys had been working on an opera about a post-apocalyptic Wales with Swansea-based composer Stephen McNeff. He asked McNeff to orchestrate the new songs, but the composer was busy. "I didn't have any deadline and I didn't want to do anything half-arsed, so it was like, 'oh, I'll wait around until he can do it.'" Add in the Festival Of Voice in Cardiff offering to pay for the National Orchestra Of Wales on the basis that he'd debut the project at the festival in June, and Rhys was in business.

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

The album's title is borrowed from a district of Potsdam (near Berlin, where the Americans, Russians and British met in 1945 to decide how to administer defeated Nazi Germany) and was chosen to evoke the Tower Of Babel. Lyrically, the record tackles our nervy times – it was made in 2016, when the Brexit vote was imminent and Trump's election lay just over the horizon. Yet there's a deftness to these melodic songs – which often touch

on the mundanities of everyday life as they deal with themes such as "the fragility of the ageing process, definitely, and political paranoia, and various worries and ailments".

Frontier Man, for instance, finds Rhys on "the frontier of delusion", which seems to be a place characterised at least in part by gentle befuddlement. Even a track about end times, *Selfies In The Sunset*, a duet with Lily Cole, has a mordant humour to it.

"I thought it was a real dark album when I was recording it and then, when I listened back, it's quite a fun record," Rhys says. "Maybe that's all the darkness I'm capable of, which doesn't sound particularly dark."

The ever-present risk with orchestral projects is that things get too overblown: a bit *Spinal Tap*, as Rhys himself acknowledges. "The pitfalls are huge with symphonic rock," he says. "It could go to Moody Blues or Wings territory, both of which have amazing moments, whereas [artists such as] Scott Walker and Lee Hazlewood and Serge Gainsbourg keep the orchestral element under control, so it doesn't overpower the songs."

It's a trick that Rhys, too, pulls off with *Babelsberg*, helped perhaps by the fact that when it came time to add the orchestral arrangements, the band were given "equal billing" in order to maintain the intimacy of the original recordings (which Rhys hopes to release at some point).

It probably also helps that *Babelsberg* comes across not as a departure, but as a kind of logical next step for a man who has tackled projects far off popular music's beaten track in recent years.

In 2014, for instance, he provided the jazz-tinged soundtrack music for *Set Fire To The Stars*, a drama about poet Dylan Thomas's visit to the US.

"It didn't have the budget for an orchestra, but it was going in that direction," he says. "I only had a quartet and a trumpeter, but definitely that record is part of the process of getting to this record. It definitely informed what I did here." ▶

Then there's *American Interior*, his 2014 multimedia project – an album, film, app and book – that saw Rhys heading for the US in the footsteps of distant relative John Evans, a farmhand from Snowdonia who travelled to America in 1792 in the hope of finding a Welsh-speaking Native American tribe said to live at the top of the Missouri river. "I sort of went into the 18th century for three years," he says. This project in turn was itself a kind of souped-up version of *Separado!* (2009), a documentary charting travels in Patagonia in search of René Griffiths (another distant relative, it seems), who sang Welsh ballads in the style of an Argentinian cowboy.

Despite all these projects being linked by heading to the Americas to interrogate what it is to be Welsh, Rhys is cautious about reading too much into this. "I don't know if [they're] about Welshness, or that I just happen to be Welsh, so those things come through," he says, adding of *American Interior*: "It was quite liberating in a way, because I was able to write in character almost, imagining someone else's life."

At a guess, he was happy with this idea because it was a way of deflecting attention. Rhys is good company, but he's also one of those people who seems to move through

"IN TERMS OF DAILY LIVING… IT'S DEFINITELY ADVANTAGEOUS [FOR ME] TO HAVE AN AVATAR OF SOME KIND"

FINYL COUNTDOWN

Before Super Furry Animals, Gruff Rhys fronted Ffa Coffi Pawb, a band that released three albums: *Dalec Peilon* (1988), *Clymhalio* (1991) and *Hei Vidal!* (1992). "I didn't sing in English until I was 25," he points out, a heritage the Furrys revisited with the Welsh-language *Mwng* (2000). In short, he's a man steeped in the Welsh-language music scene: who better to recommend some Welsh-language vinyl?

Y BLEW
Maes B
1967, single, Qualiton
"They were the first garage-rock band in the Welsh language. They sound like the Count Five or something. In fact, it's a bit of a rip off, but they were a culturally significant, short-lived band with a van with a psychedelic logo on the side, and they toured Wales for a year and then split up. The guitarist [Rick Lloyd] ended up having a No. 1 hit with The Flying Pickets."

MEIC STEVENS
Gwymon
1972, Wren
"He was the greatest Welsh-language singer-songwriter – an amazing songwriter, a mad, hedonistic life. This is a record he did in three days. He did tonnes of singles and EPs, and an English-language album called *Outlander* [Warner Brothers] in 1970. It was quite a hippy album… whereas this is super-simple. Just three chords."

GERAINT JARMAN
Tacsi I'r Tywyllwch
1977, Sain
"He was mainstream: he wasn't wild enough for punk or post-punk, and it's not kitsch, so it doesn't fit in on a *Welsh Rare Beat* compilation… It's somewhere between Television and Neil Young."

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Gadael Yr Ugeinfed Ganrif
1985, Recordiau Anhrefn
"This signified a Welsh-language underground that maybe didn't get played on the radio… A lot of bands came out of that scene. It was directly inspirational to me."

LLWYBR LLAETHOG
Dull Di-Drais
1986, single, Recordiau Anhrefn
"Anhrefn released a lot of significant records, like the first Welsh language rap/hip-hop record. It doesn't sound like conventional hip-hop, but it's significant." Llwybr Llaethog have continued to release records.

DATBLYGU
Pyst
1990, Ofn
"It's one of those records that's aged really well, it resonates. [David] Datblygu is a character somewhere between Ginsberg and Mark E Smith, but releasing records to a culture of half-a-million people, you're not going to make a living out of it, so he was working petrol pumps and stuff… He had a lyric: "One-track minds recording in 48-track studios"."

MC MABON
Nia Non
2002, Ankstmusik
"He's an interesting, overlooked character who put out five really strong albums: quite eclectic, maybe a bit like Beck, but working in a different environment, it's not LA."

GWENNO
Y Dydd Olaf
2014, Peski
"It's uncompromising. She had a community radio-station show here in Cardiff and was on a label that put on lots of nights and put on loads of bands, and they kind of created their own scene."

the world at entirely his own pace. He's a watchful presence, whose speech often tails off with: "Yeah…", leaving you uncertain whether he's about to say anything else, or sit there quietly and privately contemplate whatever just flashed across his mind. When we suggest he's cultivated a kind of anti-image down the years, he doesn't entirely disagree. "It's definitely beneficial for me if there's a picture of someone in a Power Rangers helmet out there, it's better for me than a picture of myself in terms of daily living," he says. "It's definitely advantageous to have an avatar of some kind."

THE SOUND AND THE FURRYS

But go back to the years before the turn of the millennium and, for a while at least, Rhys played the pop game in earnest as frontman with Super Furry Animals, a band that got caught up in the fuss of Britpop without ever seeming to belong in Cool Britannia. It was a past he revisited in 2016, when the band reconvened to perform shows to mark the 20th anniversaries of debut *Fuzzy Logic* (1996) and sophomore album *Radiator* (1997). Rhys says he loved being able to rehearse and perform songs that, back in the day, were deemed too difficult to incorporate into a working band's live set.

"There was none of the worry that comes with playing new material to an audience," he says, "where people don't know the songs and you don't know how they're going to go down. That element was completely taken away. You're just left with playing stuff people know. It was quite a joyful experience. Once you're over the nostalgia aspect of it, it just seems more enjoyable."

There was also a sense of the Furrys' work being validated. "It was great to verify what we did actually happened. With the past, it sometimes mixes up with dreams," says Rhys. Not that we should expect him to revisit the past anytime soon. There are no current plans for any Furry releases or shows. "I'm in a different place really, with kids," he says of his day-to-day life as a father of three. He's able to be (his word) "irresponsible" as a solo artist. "When you're in a collective, you don't want to be the person to let down the side," he adds, "whereas I don't mind letting myself down, I suppose."

To which end, Rhys is writing songs and, as this issue went to press, there were announcements of a slew of live dates, including ambitious shows performing *Babelsberg* with an orchestra. It may conceivably be a while before Rhys has time to get back to Kellys. Meanwhile, *Long Live Vinyl* has emailed the store to see if they've worked out who sung on that white label… we await a reply with interest. ●

ISLANDS

IN THE SUN

Ash frontman Tim Wheeler travelled the world when writing new album *Islands*, and his wanderlust produced a vibrant return to form for one of Britpop's best-loved bands. **Gary Walker** meets the Northern Irish singer to find out why the band still care about vinyl as much as ever…

They pressed their first record at the same time as studying for their GCSEs, released a volley of infectious chart-topping 7"s and a million-selling album while in their teens; cut 26 singles in a single year, and provoked Eric Cantona into threatening to "spit on your record". Ash's next move, in 2007, was to announce that *Twilight Of The Innocents* would be their last physically released album as the digital revolution took hold and they split from Warner subsidiary Infectious. Thankfully, the band hadn't banked on the resurgence of interest in vinyl, and this spring unleashed their seventh LP – *Islands*.

Records remain just as close to the Downpatrick, County Down band's hearts as when frontman Tim Wheeler, drummer Rick McMurray and bassist Mark Hamilton formed their Iron Maiden-aping first band Vietnam as 12-year-olds inspired by their fledgling collections of punk and metal albums.

With a catalogue that already included the debut mini-album *Trailer*, coming-of-age Britpop classic *1977*, the darker *Nu-Clear Sounds* and the swoonsome yet underrated *Free All Angels*, the decision to turn their backs on albums was shortlived. 2007 proved to be vinyl's nadir, as sales bottomed out before starting to climb again and Wheeler, who grew up listening to Pixies, Nirvana, Sonic Youth and Mudhoney records, was happy to change his mind.

"I'm delighted about it," he says. "It was a reaction to the streaming and digital iPod world. I think it was definitely a reaction to losing the experience of having a physical product. The physical format makes it easier and you feel more connected to it. I completely understand that, from my early days of collecting vinyl in the early 90s, with all the indie bands I love. It's great to see it make this comeback.

"I've always been a big collector. When I was a teenager it was a big thing, with all the Creation Records stuff, and I was a big Ride and Suede fan, and the Pixies. All those bands who put out great 12"s with a bunch of great B-sides. We kind of missed out on the 12" EP era, we were a real 7" band, but I was a real big fan of 12" EPs."

▶

THREE WHEELER

Tim's all-time-favourite records

Astral Weeks Van Morrison

"I love that album and keep coming back to it, and I love all the Belfast references in that record. I saw him do a special performance of the album in New York a few years ago."

Doolittle Pixies

"There are so many killer songs on this album, and great songwriting – brilliant, twisted, and brilliant playing, too. I love all the distinct personalities you can hear in all of the members of the band."

Singles Going Steady Buzzcocks

"I love the Buzzcocks and, again, it's just brilliant songwriting, with real mood-lifting energy and speed to it as well."

ISLAND LIFE

Islands, the band's most immediate, fresh-sounding collection since the heady rush of springtime romanticism that was 2001's *Free All Angels*, takes its name from the album's geographically adventurous writing sessions. Wheeler, recalibrating after the breakup of his marriage, sought solace in the isolation of Japan's Naoshima island, Mallorca – once home to poet Robert Graves, the Greek island of Santorini and Lambay Island, off the coast of Dublin. The final stop on his globetrotting tour of the world's islands was the band's own Manhattan studio in New York, and Wheeler acknowledges the influence of each of those settings on his songwriting. "I hear little bits of it in some of the song stories," he says. "The last show of our tour was in Japan and I had a little bit of time. I'd heard about these islands I'd always wanted to see, which have a lot of art galleries and an incongruous mix of isolated, beautiful nature with amazing architecture. It was the start of a bit of a pilgrimage.

"A few months later, I wanted to go to Deià. I like Robert Graves and wanted to see where he used to live. There's a great record by Fionn Regan, *100 Acres Of Sycamore*, that he wrote in Deià, and Kevin Ayers used to live there, so there was a bit of rock 'n' roll history. After that, I went to Santorini. I kind of felt a theme developing, and thought, 'I should go and do more writing on islands.'

"Then I went to Lambay, off the coast of Dublin. Some friends own the island, and it was the most isolated of all – there are only six people living there year-round. Probably by the third island, I realised it was a good little pattern, and we were recording in Manhattan where our studio is – that's a completely different thing, obviously, but with all the islands I went to, I wanted a bit of isolation for the writing."

Seeking new ways of unlocking his creative process for the band's first album since 2015's *Kablammo!*, Wheeler turned to some unusual writing techniques – with prolific results.

"When Justin from The Vaccines was living in New York I met him, and he does this thing before he starts writing every album, where he tries to write 20 songs in 12 hours. He roped me into doing it and I was actually shocked that I got a few good songs out of it.

"I got into trying to do it as a regular thing, but I could never get anywhere near 20 songs, as I like to dabble in production a bit. Eventually, I got into this regular thing

Alex John Beck

Getty

> **"IT WAS AWESOME GETTING OUR FIRST SLAB OF VINYL. STEVE LAMACQ PLAYED IT"**

of doing 10 songs in 10 hours and I get a lot of good ideas out of that. Most of the record springs out of it, and I think over a few years, I've got about 250 song ideas out of it.

"A lot of rubbish comes out of it, but also a lot of fresh ideas, because a few songs into each day, I start going off on tangents, and there's no pressure. Sometimes, when I'm at my most relaxed, not really caring what comes out, I get songs that never would have been written if I'd been trying. Because of the time pressure, I'm forced to finish ideas that I'm not really sure of. Before the inner critic can come into play, I have to finish the song.

"The song *Buzzkill*, I would have said: 'This is too stupid' and stopped, but I finished it and I've had a really good response from people about the song."

STEPHEN FUNDS THE RECORD

Now a three-piece again after second guitarist Charlotte Hatherley's 10-year spell in the band, the chemistry among the founder members of Ash is still as strong as when they juggled their A-Level homework with playing the Camden Falcon and appearing on *Top Of The Pops*.

"We're like brothers, really and we've got a really fun way of working together," says Wheeler. "Two of us have lived in New York for 12 years and Rick lives in Scotland. My favourite time with the band is when we're working on new material, a long time before anyone's going to hear it. It always reminds me of when we were 15 getting together demo tapes and working on ideas, and the three of us buzzing about it – that hasn't changed at all." The band's first 7", 1994's *Jack Names The Planets*, was funded by radio plugger Stephen Taverner, who gave the trio £300 to go into the studio based purely on hearing an early version of *Girl From Mars*.

Originals from the first run of 1,000 on Taverner's La La Land label are now pretty scarce, although Wheeler did have the foresight to secure one.

"*Jack Names The Planets* was really cool," he recalls. "I was amazed at the trust of this guy who sent £300 for us to go and record having not even met us, just based on our demo tape. He went on to become our manager, so it was definitely a good punt by him. It was awesome getting our first slab of vinyl, it felt very real. Steve Lamacq played it. I was 17, doing my homework and this was the radio show I always used to listen to doing my homework. Now he was playing us! I couldn't believe it, I ran jumping through the house.

"I've got one or two copies of it, and a lot of our early records I'd try to get a stash of 10 for myself, but some of the early ones were so rare that I only got one."

That first release was followed in October 1994 by *Trailer* and 18 months later by *1977*, which crashed into the UK chart at No. 1, going on to sell a million copies, with *Goldfinger* and *Oh Yeah* Top Five singles. The album, recorded with Oasis producer Owen Morris at Rockfield, remains one of the most potent snapshots of the Britpop era. Wheeler says the series of gigs the band played to celebrate the album's 20-year anniversary gave them fresh impetus to start work on *Islands*.

"It was nice coming back and working on the record following those shows," he ▶

Getty

A-Z

Between 12 October 2009 and 27 September 2010, Ash released 26 7" singles on vinyl, each represented by a different letter of the alphabet, on their own Atomic Hearts label. The ambitious feat was backed by an alphabetical tour of the UK.

"We'd always done 7"s of all our catalogue and we still persevered with vinyl when people weren't doing it much," says Wheeler. "I was very fond of it when we were at school and didn't have time to record the whole *1977* album – we did those singles every three months. I was a big fan of when The Wedding Present did their singles series as well, I thought that was really cool. Around that time, we could see albums weren't getting the same buzz and attention as they were before, and it really devalued it when people could download records for free… It was partly mourning the death of albums, but I felt like doing something different creatively, too, because we'd just been album-tour-album-tour for a long time.

"We'd set up our own studio to record *Twilight Of The Innocents*, so we had a place where we could become a bit of a factory and do something like that. It was just having the freedom to stretch our wings a bit, creatively."

says. "*1977* is a great album to play live as a three-piece. There's a simplicity to a lot of the songs, and it definitely gave me the confidence to know that we can have really simple songs like *Kung Fu* – and *Buzzkill* is not a million miles away from that in terms of simplicity. It's one of the albums we've revisited most, and it still stands up well. I did feel a kind of pressure when I wrote it. The first half of it, not so much… we recorded a bunch of the singles through the year leading up to it, because we were still in school and didn't have time to record a full album.

"*Kung Fu*, *Girl From Mars* and *Angel Interceptor* were all put out as singles leading up to it and they all took off, it was amazing. Then I had to write the rest of the record to follow up all these hits! It was quite a challenge. I wasn't really ready for it, although it was all I'd ever wanted. It was a mad time, those whole couple of years."

Now a resident of Brooklyn, NYC, Wheeler is spoilt for choice when it comes to record shopping. "I live very close to Rough Trade, and there's also Academy Records in Greenpoint, near me. We had a really fun day – the Record Store Crawl for Record Store Day, where they organise a crawl on a bus through a bunch of different neighbourhoods. We played on the bus between stops and we went up to Astoria in Queens and down to Greenpoint. It was great fun hanging out with a bunch of fellow record nerds."

PAST MASTERS

Reflecting on the records that inspired the band in their early days, Wheeler says: "When we started out, *Nevermind* was massive for us; Pixies' *Doolittle*, Teenage Fanclub's *Bandwagonesque*, Mudhoney's *Superfuzz Bigmuff*, Sonic Youth's *Dirty* and *Goo*, and before that, I was really into Guns N' Roses' *Appetite For Destruction*, The Stooges' first album… I listened to *…Spiders From Mars* by Bowie a lot making *1977*, The Beach Boys, ABBA…"

Creatively stimulated by his experimental songwriting approach and enjoying the company of his bandmates of 26 years, Wheeler's solo project that yielded the album *Lost Domain* in 2014 is on ice, as Ash gear up for more touring and an eighth studio album.

> "WE WERE STILL IN SCHOOL AND DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO RECORD A FULL ALBUM"

"I still love touring and I'd like to do more than we do," he says. "The other two guys have kids, so we don't go out on the long relentless tours like we used to, and I kind of miss that lifestyle. Now we tour for two or three weeks and take a break. I love travelling and playing live. 10 years of my life was touring, and there was a bit of a lack of normality. It's good there's a bit more balance in life now, but I really enjoyed the travelling and seeing the world.

"We've actually pretty much written a new album already – you see, I've got all of these millions of songs! It's going to be a bit slow recording this year, as we're doing a lot of touring. It's just trying to fit it in, but we'll hopefully have another album next year. It's quite a bit more experimental, maybe a bit more like the experimentation of the A-Z series. We'll see what direction it ultimately takes when we record it, but it's quite different at the moment." ●

[PIAS]

ACTION PRESTON • BADLANDS CHELTENHAM • BANQUET KINGSTON • BEATDOWN NEWCASTLE • BLACK CIRCLE LEIGHTON BUZZARD • BLACKEST RAINBOW SHEFFIELD • CASBAH GREENWICH • CODA MUSIC EDINBURGH • COOL DISC DERRY • CRASH LEEDS • DAVID'S LETCHWORTH • DIVERSE MUSIC NEWPORT • DRIFT TOTNES • EARWORM YORK • ECLIPSE WALSALL • ELEPHANT WINCHESTER • EMPIRE ST ALBANS • FIVES LEIGH ON SEA • FOREVER RECORDS NOTTINGHAM • FREEBIRD DUBLIN • FRIENDLY BRISTOL • GATEFIELD SOUNDS WHITSTABLE • HONEST JONS LONDON • HOT SALVATION FOLKESTONE • JAM FALMOUTH • JUMBO LEEDS • LEFT FOR DEAD SHREWSBURY • LOST IN VINYL CAMBRIDGE • MOLD RECORD SHOP MOLD • MONORAIL GLASGOW • MUSIC NOT DEAD BEXHILL ON SEA • NIGHTFLY RECORDS UXBRIDGE • NORMANS LEEDS • PEBBLE EASTBOURNE • PICCADILLY MANCHESTER • PIE & VINYL SOUTHSEA

PHONICA LONDON • POLAR BEAR BIRMINGHAM • PROBE LIVERPOOL • RAPTURE WITNEY • RAVES FROM THE GRAVE FROME • RECORD CORNER GODALMING • REFLEX NEWCASTLE • RELEVANT CAMBRIDGE • RESIDENT BRIGHTON • ROLLERCOASTER KILKENNY • ROUGH TRADE BRISTOL • ROUGH TRADE LONDON • ROUGH TRADE NOTTINGHAM • SEISMIC LEAMINGTON SPA • SISTER RAY LONDON • SLIDE BEDFORD • SOUNDCLASH NORWICH • SOUND IT OUT STOCKTON ON TEES • SOUND KNOWLEDGE MARLBOROUGH • SOUNDS OF THE UNIVERSE LONDON • SOUTH SOUTHEND • SPILLERS CARDIFF • SPINDIZZY DUBLIN • SWORDFISH BIRMINGHAM • TALLBIRD CHESTERFIELD • TOWER DUBLIN • TRANSMISSION MARGATE • TRUCK STORE OXFORD • UNDERGROUND SOLU'SHN EDINBURGH • VENUS VINYL LONDON • VINYL COLLECTORS SALISBURY • VINYL HUNTER BURY ST EDMUNDS • WAH WAH RECORDS WAKEFIELD

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ALIVE IN THE EAST?

BINKER AND MOSES
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Gearbox Records

DIRTY PROJECTORS
LAMP LIT PROSE
Domino Records

S W A N S
SOUNDTRACKS FOR THE BLIND

SWANS
SOUNDTRACKS FOR THE BLIND
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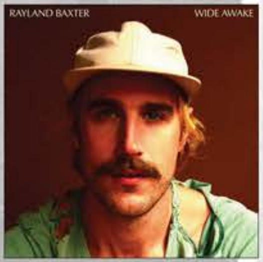


RAYLAND BAXTER
WIDE AWAKE
ATO Records

CIGARETTES AFTER SEX

CIGARETTES AFTER SEX
CIGARETTES AFTER SEX
Partisan

ShadowParty

SHADOWPARTY
SHADOWPARTY
Mute

THE DROWNING CRAZE
SINGLES 81/82
Bella Union

SOULWAX
ESSENTIAL
DEEWEE

Sun on the square

THE INNOCENCE MISSION
SUN ON THE SQUARE
Bella Union

S W A N S
DIE TÜR IST ZU

SWANS
DIE TÜR IST ZU
Mute

Sylvian
Czukay

DAVID SYLVIAN/HOLGER CZUKAY
PLIGHT & PREMONITION, FLUX & MUTABILITY
Groenland Records

MATTIEL
MATTIEL
Heavenly Recordings

URBAN LEGENDS

From Bow E3 to MBE, grime's ascendancy has been seismic and ferocious. **Sam Willis** explores the story behind the UK's 21st-century punks…

Every punk fan will remember the January 1977 issue of *Sideburns* in which the fanzine taught its readers three chords – A, E and G – and told them: "Now form a band". That DIY self-governance resulted in one of the most influential forms of music ever created on either side of the Atlantic. Fast-forward to East London at the turn of the millennium and an unlikely descendant of punk was being forged – in a melting pot of poverty, disaffection and a similarly belligerent self-determination – and heralded by many as the most original frontier of UK urban music for decades: grime.

2017 was the peak of what many called a renaissance in the genre and, after a significant dip in quality and consumption at the tail-end of the 2000s and into the early 2010s, the numbers certainly seem to prove that it has arrived once again, with a vengeance. Last year saw grime streams reaching an all-time high of one billion a week and a 109% increase in physical album sales, according to the British Phonographic Industry (BPI). Although many of these second-generation releases were predominantly CD and download only, they are now also widely available on wax, reflecting the format's renewed authority.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF GRIME

In the same year, we also witnessed the first 'pure grime' UK No. 1 in Stormzy's *Gang Signs & Prayer,* and a Drake album – *More Life* – celebrating grime through featured artists, foregrounding its sonic footprint and the typically West Indian dialectal reference points that have become synonymous with grime and the wider culture.

So, how did we get from Bow tower blocks to Wiley receiving an MBE, and an album that generated 89.9 million Apple Music streams on its first day of release and went on to breach the Top 10 album charts in five countries? Culturally and socially, the story starts with the arrival of the Windrush Generation in 1948 – but sonically, the genre is undoubtedly rooted in UK garage.

By the late 90s, garage, originally an American import, was fully formed and thriving in the UK. By the early 2000s, it had mainstream totemic figures and chart hits from the likes of Craig David, Daniel Bedingfield and Artful Dodger, to name just a few.

Grime's ascendancy was born out of the disenfranchisement at a genre that branded itself as champagne-swilling, decadent and elite. "With the garage and the grime thing, the garage people didn't like them," remembers Nick Huggett – former A&R at XL and the man who signed grime posterboy Dizzee Rascal (as well as Adele). "They were younger, garage was like really dressed up. Those kids weren't welcome at the garage events and part of the music was about having their own thing."

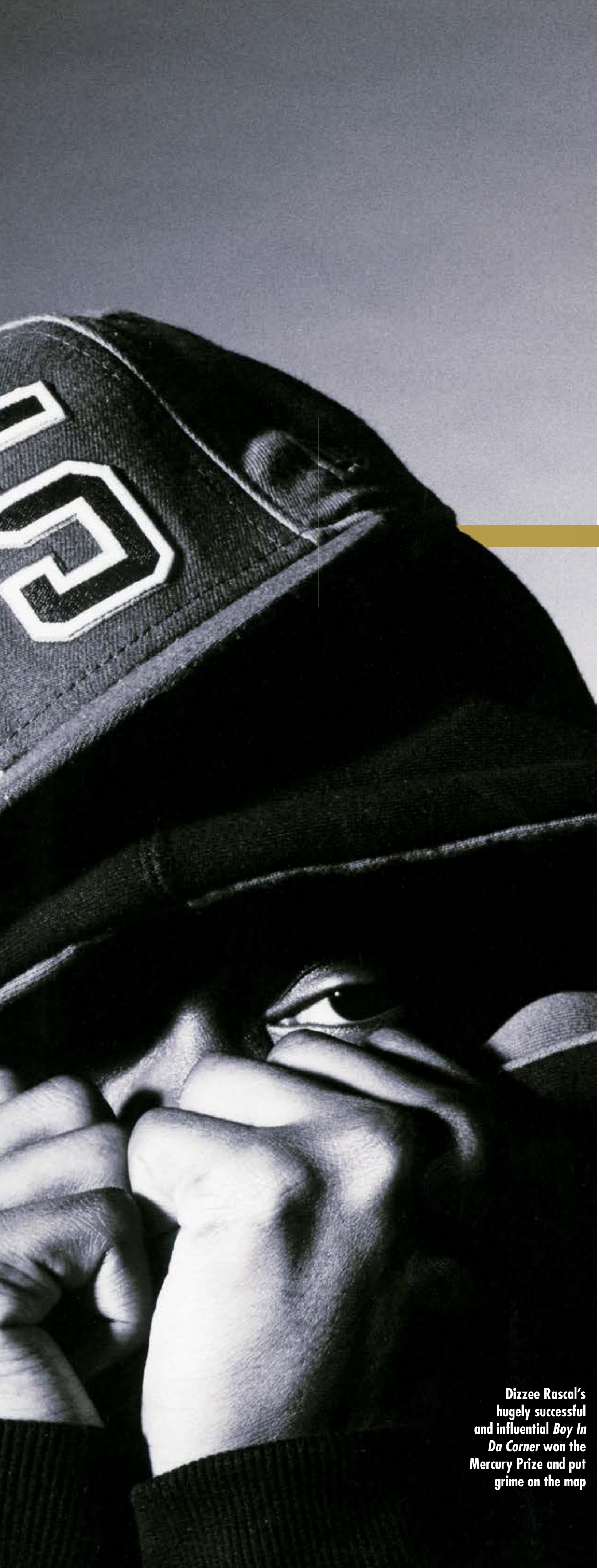
RADIO CLASH

Much like the punks before them, early grime artists had been left behind; they needed something destructive, something simple that they could make on a budget and call their own, out of artistic necessity and outsider angst.

The beginnings of a crossover arrived in the form of influential garage soundsystems gaining notoriety on pirate radio stations in London. "Pirate radio was important, and it's influential," Huggett says. "The whole thing emerged for those guys with the clashes on the radio stations and that sort of stuff. That was a culture in itself that existed outside of releasing records."

A close relationship between pirate radio stations, influential record shops and the DJs and producers creating small, modest volumes of white labels and dub plates drove much of what happened in the UK garage and grime scenes at the tail end of the 90s and beginning of the 2000s.

A brief aside here is the importance of soundsystem and soundclash culture, which was imported from Jamaica and had a huge impact on the early formation and distribution of grime. It was this clan culture and tribal clashing that would lead to the *Lord Of The Mics* MC-battle DVDs' 'crew' mentality and again, positions grime as an ancestor of the Windrush generation.



Dizzee Rascal's hugely successful and influential *Boy In Da Corner* won the Mercury Prize and put grime on the map

ALL YOU NEEDED TO CREATE CULTURE-SHIFTING MUSIC IN THE 2000S WAS A PC AND ENTHUSIASM

The Pay As U Go Cartel, which for a while included self-proclaimed 'godfather of grime' Wiley (now MBE), More Fire Crew, Genius Cru and So Solid Crew, took a defining step in the development from garage to grime. The dichotomous MC/DJ relationship, up until then, had largely favoured DJs. MCs had been an accompaniment to the music; repeating hooks rather than crafting whole verses and lyrical conceits. The aforementioned crews irrevocably changed that. Between 2000 and 2002, tracks such as *Champagne Dance*, *Know We*, *21 Seconds*, *Oi!* and *Boom Selection* were crusading across pirate airwaves.

CAR-BOOT SALE

By the second year of the new millennium, a fertile new feeding ground for hungry MCs emerged driven by bold new productions, in particular *Pulse X* by Youngstar and *Creeper* by Roll Deep's Danny Weed. These two tracks played a pivotal role in what would later be called grime. The beats were stripped back and simple, created on rudimentary production software, and left ample space for burgeoning MCs to 'spit' on.

Instead of three chords, all you needed to create culture-shifting music in the 2000s was a PC and a determined enthusiasm – that was also evident in the entrepreneurial spirit required to actually get the music into the shops.

"They'd press up a record and sell it from the boot of a car… put it in the shops, so people could consume it. They were shifting quite a lot as well, a few thousand," says Huggett. "It was quick money coming in, but also what happened through that was it just started to catch people's ears and spread."

The role of key record shops – Big Apple in Croydon and Rhythm Division in Bow in particular – can't be overstated. Like pirate radio stations, these outlets were intrinsically linked with the scene, providing an important space for white-label records to be sold in the areas that the music was being created. "You'd go there on a weekly basis, or even more than that, because there was so much music that was coming out and you wanted to make sure that you knew about it. It was early in my ▶

Grime superstar Stormzy was among the nominees for the 2018 Ivor Novello Awards

career as an A&R guy, so it was important for me to know all of the hot new records," says Huggett.

BOY IN DA SPOTLIGHT

These early white labels have become mythologised rarities. Some were adorned with Wiley's phone number, and they remain important relics in understanding how grime evolved into what it has become today. The blurred dividing lines between producer, distributor and retailer created an energetic ecosystem of collaboration, which put money into the hands of the people involved. It allowed those artists to grow organically, irrespective of any industry interest.

The first real commercial breakthrough, when people outside of the scene started to take serious note, was Dizzee Rascal's seminal *Boy In Da Corner*, released in 2003. Huggett had been listening intently to what was going on and saw in Dizzee the hallmarks of someone more substantial. "*I Luv U* was branching out of pirate radio into Radio 1, into XFM and, for an A&R person, those are the kinds of people you look for," he says. "Whatever it was, garage, grime, dubstep, was fine in its scene, but you are looking for the things that were gonna reach outside – and that was reaching outside."

Huggett, who had already been wildly impressed by So Solid Crew, managed to convince Dizzee and his manager that XL was the right home for him. It turned out to be a fruitful partnership, but at the time it may have seemed a curious choice. "There was me, a young A&R guy that had never done anything, working for an indie which, at the time, had no reputation in that world. XL had hardcore, it had Prodigy and

GRIME RARITIES

Tomb Crew DJ and promoter Thomas Pinchard explains grime's vinyl-only ethos

A DJ for over 15 years, and part of Nottingham's Tomb Crew from 2004 to 2010(ish), for the last five years Pinchard has been a promoter at Birthdays, putting on 100-plus shows across the genres of grime, hip-hop, dancehall, trap, footwerk and garage. "Coming out of the 90s, I had primarily listened to hardcore [punk] and New York rap. Scenes that produced aggressive, emotional music told by storytellers. It was fate that I would fall in love with grime.

"The thing about grime was if you wanted to own any of it you *had* to buy the vinyl – or hang out with the people who bought the vinyl. MP3 was an unknown to grime back then. Around 2004, I was living in Nottingham, where we had a limited supply. I relied on the legendary Selectadisc, where I bought my first grime vinyl – Wonder's *What,* in 2004. I'd take trips down to London to visit Rhythm Division in Bow and Black Market Records in Soho to stock up, until I made the move to Hackney in 2006.

"Every week, those famous LDN record stores were being dropped off fresh white labels with people's names and numbers scribbled over them. But if you missed a week, then your chance to own Rebound-X's *Rhythm & Gash* on 10" would be gone forever. Being a part of this golden era of British music during this period was so exciting. It was so punk, so DIY, under the radar. Young kids doing it themselves and making it happen.

"Since grime's resurgence over the last couple of years, the 'famous' releases of that golden era are going for such unattainably large prices that it puts them out of reach for most people."

Crown Jewels

"All my early Wiley white labels that he put out on his Wiley Kat records from 2003 to 2006, including *Eskimo, Eskimo 4, Morgue, Igloo, Ground Zero…* I still get shivers listening to these. No one really knows the pressing details, least of all Wiley, I'm sure!"

Jammer (with Wiley, Kano, Durrty Goodz, D Double E), *Destruction VIP*: "Jammer's best production with each MC at their lyrical best. One of grime's finest moments."

Skepta, *Pirate Sessions/DTI/Private Caller:* "Three standout records of that era. *Private Caller* was the first underground grime release that I saw with an actual cover."

Ruff Sqwad, *Tings In Boots:* "The most DIY-sounding grime release of them all. Ruff Sqwad releases are almost mythically expensive. This remains my favourite release of theirs."

Alias, *Heat/Heat 2/Gladiator/Fight Club:* "It's impossible not to pull a 'screw face' – so grimey, and provided the blueprint. Again, all are white labels, quantities unknown."

SL2, but it didn't really have a great deal of credibility in black music. An emerging MC wouldn't be looking at XL and going, 'that's where I want to sign', which is funny, because it's where everyone wants to sign now."

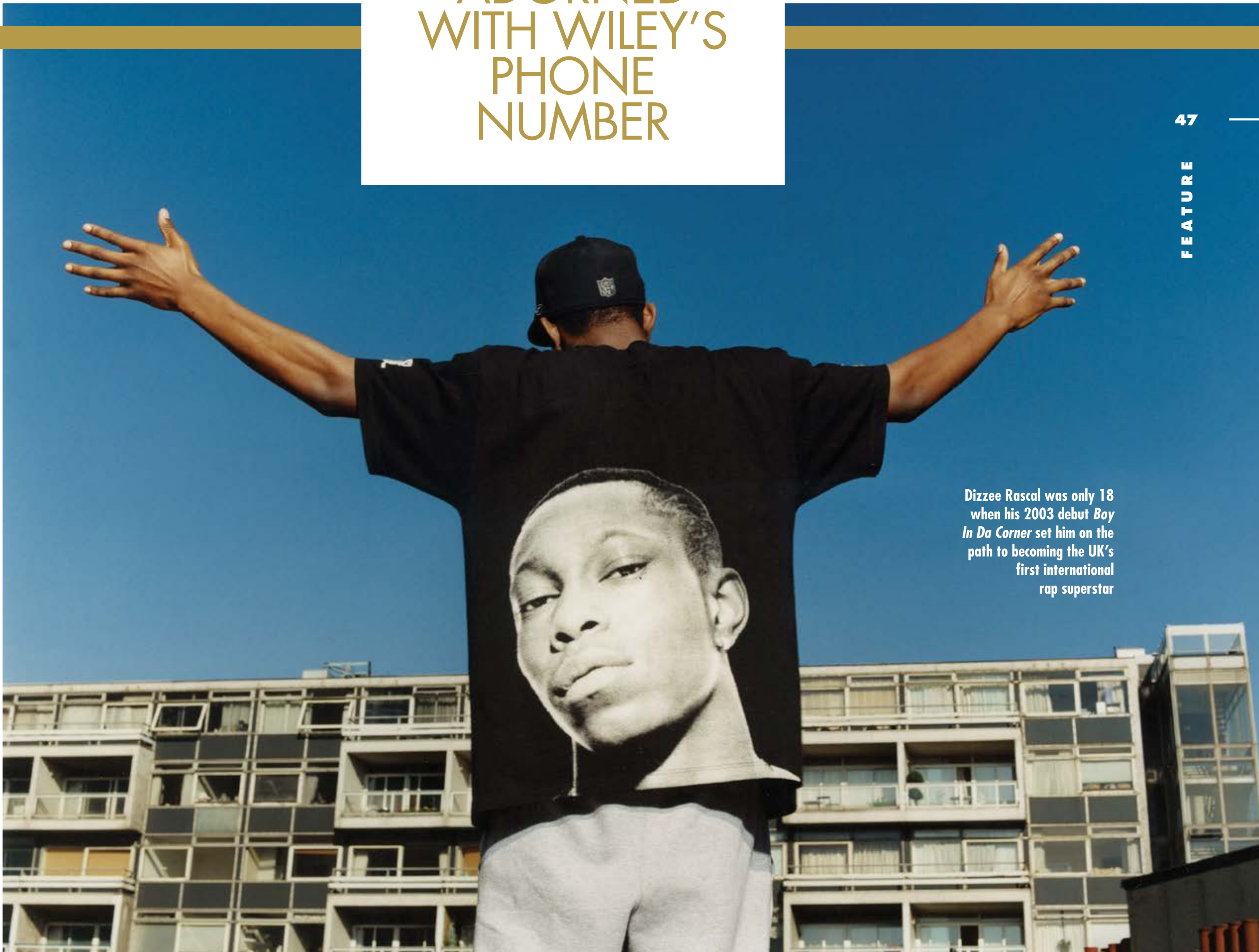
The infatuation for major-label signings may have proved another barrier but, luckily for Huggett, XL and perhaps even Dizzee, they weren't interested enough in the scene yet. "The majors thought, 'this is cool, but we've got The Neptunes or Timbaland', or whoever was the hot American thing. They were completely missing the point," says Huggett. "50% of what was brilliant about it was that sonically, it was British. It owed a lot to jungle and drum 'n' bass – that's what Dizzee had listened to – and Southern hip-hop, and you can hear that in it… There is that influence there, but it was something very British and, to me, that was what was exciting."

The resulting *Boy In Da Corner* acutely reflected a time and place, with blistering lyrical dexterity, inspired production and brutal social commentary on subjects ranging from teenage pregnancy to knife crime. This unfettered honesty sold. A lot. *Boy In Da Corner* has now sold over 250,000 copies worldwide; it won the Mercury Prize and went gold in its first year – which, according to Huggett, "was significant, because there weren't loads of other black music artists having gold records. There weren't actually that many gold records across the whole music business."

However, grime was still misunderstood for its rawness in those early years, which made it a challenging record to market at first, for all of its later successes. "It's important to remember that he didn't just come out and sell 100,000 – it was a slog," remembers Huggett. "Every time we took a single to radio, they didn't want to back it, because it was too hard. Which, again, was funny, because fast-forward five or six years and they're playing Skrillex on daytime Radio 1. I'm scratching my head, because this sounds way more mental than *I Luv U* or *Fix Up, Look Sharp*."

Culturally, *Boy In Da Corner* has had a profound effect. It's one of those records that come along once or twice a decade and change everything irrevocably. Dizzee wrote about what he saw and the result was dark, cold and unflinchingly honest. It was the first breakthrough grime record – although the genre didn't have a name by that point – and set a bar for Dizzee's peers to aspire to. ▶

> EARLY GRIME WHITE LABELS ARE RARITIES. SOME WERE ADORNED WITH WILEY'S PHONE NUMBER



Dizzee Rascal was only 18 when his 2003 debut *Boy In Da Corner* set him on the path to becoming the UK's first international rap superstar

Influential grime collective Roll Deep were founded by Wiley and included a roll call of future grime stars

Picture: Simon Wheatley

Along with Wiley and his tutelage of the scene (which would take another five pages to write about), the album was a key factor in stepping things up for everyone.

TODAY, THE UK…

The album also helped pave the way for the second generation of artists, who are enjoying the renaissance now: "The cultural impact of that and where we find ourselves today, I don't think you can underestimate the importance of *Boy In Da Corner*…," says Huggett. "When I listened to the Stormzy record, I could hear a direct lineage back to *Boy In Da Corner*. His flows, some of the references he lifts from that."

Nine months after *Sideburns*' three-chord diagram, *Never Mind The Bollocks*… arrived kicking and screaming from the womb, holding up two fingers to convention and a ghoulish mirror to society. It was the culmination of a scene bubbling with aggression and an inherently British terra firma, from which tendrils of influence still stretch today. Dizzee Rascal's *Boy In Da Corner* has a similar space within the history of grime. Here we have a record which was forged from a music culture backlashing from convention, railing against social inequality and innovating without vanity. Both punk and grime paid credence to enthusiasm, ingenuity and sovereignty over virtuosity; both were contrarian and highly controversial. Importantly, both have since become forces for critical, as well as commercial, success. The next step on from grime's conquering of the UK must now be the world. ●

DIZZEE'S *BOY IN DA CORNER* WAS A KEY FACTOR IN STEPPING THINGS UP FOR EVERYONE

Wiley – self-proclaimed godfather of grime – is now an MBE

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VINYL'S 50 GREATEST SOUNDTRACKS

A soundtrack is much more than just a collection of songs. The great ones are woven into the DNA of the film itself, heightening the cinema experience; and when the movie is over, they stand out as an album you want to add to your collection. **Gary Tipp** selects 50 of the best…

From the epic sweep of an original score by a legendary composer to a batch of iconic songs carefully curated and afforded the big-screen treatment, music has always been an intrinsic part of the movie-going experience.

It's a facet of cinema that has always translated well onto vinyl, via the soundtrack album. Over the past few years, as vinyl sales have continued to increase around the globe, the number of soundtrack albums now on the racks has snowballed – with many becoming top-selling LPs.

Our Top 50 list features both original scores and song collections, and throughout the selection process, we've veered towards vinyl soundtracks that possess a close cultural connection with rock, pop, jazz and soul, foregoing those with a more classical approach from Hollywood's Golden Age. It was US filmmaker Mike Nichols in *The Graduate* who broke new ground back in 1967 by mixing popular music with cinema. His use of Simon & Garfunkel's folk-pop tunes created one of film's first 'needle drop' moments – needle drop being a cinematic term for the moment when a filmmaker takes an already existing song and uses it to light up a scene.

Think Robert De Niro in *Mean Streets* entering a dingy NYC bar with two girls on his arm to the backing of *Jumpin' Jack Flash*. Or Michael Madsen getting creative with a straight razor in *Reservoir Dogs* to the accompaniment of Stealers Wheel and *Stuck In The Middle With You*. These are just two of cinema's needle-drop moments, where movies and music combine to create great magic and art.

MOVIE MUSIC'S MECCA

The Record Album is the UK's leading destination for soundtracks on vinyl

With OST kings Nick Cave and Warren Ellis listed among his regular customers (both live nearby), it's no wonder proprietor George Ginn's The Record Album possesses such an enviable reputation as the UK's destination of choice for movie soundtracks on vinyl. Other musicians to have visited include Amon Tobin, The Avalanches, Damon Albarn and members of Radiohead.

Located a stone's throw from Brighton's main railway station, Ginn, after leaving the Royal Air Force, has been specialising in film soundtracks since 1948 (George is nudging 90) – which comfortably earns him the honour of being Brighton's longest established dealer.

As you would imagine upon entering the hallowed premises – the third shop to bear the name of the business over the years – you feel as though you've been transported to another world, place and time.

Once over the threshold at The Record Album, you are treated to a treasure trove of collectible vinyl, all lovingly selected by the great man. His favourite film composers include Golden Age greats such as Bernard Herrmann (*Citizen Kane*, *Psycho*) and Franz Waxman (*Rebecca*, *A Place In The Sun*).

50

WIND RIVER

Nick Cave and Warren Ellis

Lakeshore Records (2017)

£20

Nick Cave and off-duty Bad Seed Ellis have a proven track record as the go-to twosome for hard-edged contemporary film scores. The maverick couple's melodic work on Taylor Sheridan's *Wind River* is as poignant as it is inventive and interconnects with the moody chill of the film. *The Proposition* and *The Assassination Of Jesse James…* have yet to make it to vinyl. Why?

REPO MAN

Various Artists

MCA (1984)

£35

The good and the great of LA's mid-80s hardcore punk scene add the required amount of piss and vinegar to the OST of director Alex Cox's everyday tale of aliens and car repossession. Iggy Pop is on duty for the title track, while Black Flag, Suicidal Tendencies, Circle Jerks and Latino miscreants The Plugz are on hand to deliver their own particular brand of menace.

49

48

BABY DRIVER

Various Artists

30th Century Records (2017)

£20

With its getaway-driver hero permanently plugged into his iPod, Brit director Edgar Wright's car-chase action thriller is pretty much an exercise in syncing an entire movie to music. The result is a willfully eclectic soundtrack with the snarly garage funk of Jon Spencer Blues Explosion's *Bellbottoms* memorably taking pride of place.

43

NOSFERATU THE VAMPYRE

Popul Vuh

Light In The Attic (2015)

£40

Legendary German director Werner Herzog's 1979 tribute to Friedrich Murnau's 1922 silent classic features the bug-eyed Klaus Kinski in the role he was born to play. Layered with lashings of dark dread, the unsettling soundtrack is provided by new-age krautrockers Popul Vuh, who regularly contributed to Herzog's movies. There are many versions: the Light In The Attic reissue is definitive.

42

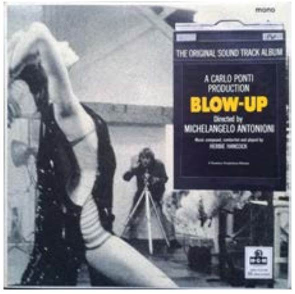
BLOW-UP

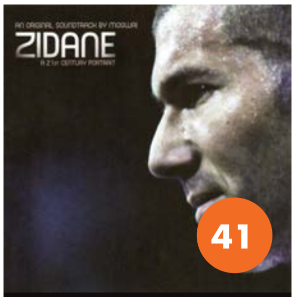
Herbie Hancock

MGM Records (1967)

£50

1960s London, as portrayed in Michelangelo Antonioni's frequently brilliant *Blow Up*, is given a suitably swinging soul-jazz score courtesy of Miles Davis acolyte Herbie Hancock. A rock element is added to the soundtrack by The Yardbirds, who briefly appear in the movie during a club sequence, together with groovy psych-scenesters Tomorrow, featuring a young Steve Howe.





41

ZIDANE: A 21ST CENTURY PORTRAIT

Mogwai

PIAS (2006)

£20

Rather than keeping its eye on the ball, the art-house movie *Zidane* follows the movement of football's Zen master during the full 90 minutes of a game. Scottish post-rockers Mogwai were tasked with soundtracking the film and delivered a stirring album of two halves. The band's OST to TV drama *Les Revenants* is another stunner.

TRON: LEGACY

Daft Punk
Walt Disney (2010)
£25

Daft Punk's uncanny resemblance to the characters that inhabit the futuristic world of this virtual-reality remake meant they were destined to deliver its score. Recorded with an 85-piece orchestra and cut to the movie, the robotic Frenchmen's inspired mix of strings and synth meshes together seamlessly to create a striking score.

ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK
Disney
TRON
LEGACY
MUSIC BY DAFT PUNK

47

ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK
pretty in pink

46

PRETTY IN PINK

Various Artists
A&M (1986)
£30

Director John Hughes was the absolute master at committing teenage angst to celluloid in the Brat Pack movies of the 80s and in doing so, nailed the zeitgeist. And *Pretty In Pink*'s soundtrack neatly defines what those gawky pubescents were listening to, with Echo & The Bunnymen, OMD, New Order and Psychedelic Furs providing the new-wave sounds.

RUSHMORE

Various Artists
London Records
(2015)
£20

Devo's Mark Mothersbaugh and director Wes Anderson have collaborated on a number of soundtrack albums, but *Rushmore* is the best. Mothersbaugh's whimsical instrumental passages rub shoulders with a select choice of British Invasion curios, including The Kinks, The Who and The Creation's classic *Making Time. The Royal Tenenbaums* OST is also a winner, but has yet to appear on vinyl.

Original Motion Picture Soundtrack
RUSHMORE

45

44

SELMASONGS

Björk
One Little Indian (2000)
£20

Selmasongs is subtitled *Music From The Motion Picture Soundtrack Dancer In The Dark* and is Björk's companion piece to her acting debut in the Lars Von Trier movie. Her harrowing first role was that of a Czech immigrant in the US who is slowly going blind, and the songs here are open expressions of her sorrow. The album contains seven original Björk compositions.

40

BERBARIAN SOUND STUDIO

Broadcast
Warp (2013)
£15

Birmingham's neo-psychedelicists Broadcast's eerie accompaniment to Peter Strickland's psychological thriller consists of 39 short pieces of taut electronica matching the movie's creepy tone and reiterates what a fine band Broadcast were. Sadly, James Cargill completed the album alone following the death of bandmate Trish Keenan.

BERBERIAN
SOUND STUDIO
Original Soundtrack
BROADCAST

a film by JIM JARMUSCH
DEAD MAN
WANTED
JOHNNY DEPP
music by
NEIL YOUNG

39

DEAD MAN

Neil Young
Vapor (1996)
£80

Neil Young recorded seven stark instrumental works for the soundtrack to Jim Jarmusch's poetic western. The great man improvised the score on electric guitar while sitting alone in a recording studio watching the newly edited outtakes. Rumour has it that Young had initially considered enlisting Nirvana's Krist Novoselic and Dave Grohl to help him.

38

WILD STYLE

Various Artists
Chrysalis (1983)
£25

Wild Style the movie went largely unseen on its cinematic release in 1983. Its soundtrack, on the other hand, became one of the landmark albums of early 80s hip-hop and retains a freshness to this day. Produced by Chris Stein of Blondie fame with Fab 5 Freddy as its musical director, the OST included live performances from the cream of the old-school rap underground.

MUSIC FROM THE MOTION PICTURE
GHOST DOG
THE WAY OF THE SAMURAI
BY THE RZA

37

GHOST DOG: THE WAY OF THE SAMURAI

RZA
Razor Sharp,
Epic, SME (1999)
£20

RZA, the Wu-Tang Clan's founding father and high priest, was better placed than most to provide director Jim Jarmusch with a hip-hop score that embraced both Eastern mysticism and sharp, pointy samurai swords. His fast, edgy and abrasive presence is the perfect counterpoint to the movie's slower paced, pseudo-spiritual scenes.

ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK

Indie-rockers Liars make their OST debut

With Liars announcing the release of their first original soundtrack, *1/1*, we chatted through the process with them. Created soon after 2014 LP *Mess*, these are the last recordings by Angus Andrew and Aaron Hemphill before the latter amicably left the band.

What first attracted you to the movie?
Angus: "Jeremy Phillips, the director, made contact with us and said he was listening to *WIXIW* while working on this film. We felt he was coming from a place of common ground…"

Aaron: "The freedom and amount of trust Jeremy granted us was pretty incredible. When we met him, he was kind and ambitious and made it pretty clear through his enthusiasm that he'd finish his project."

LIARS
ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK
TO THE FILM
1/1

Did anything about the process surprise you?
Angus: "It felt very natural. Making sound is really one of the funnest things to do musically. As a songwriter, it's extremely freeing. I expected the whole process of the movie being made to take a long time, but I was pretty astounded just how big and ongoing these projects are."

Aaron: "I used to imagine writing music for films in front of a large video screen with a timecode running and some crazy elaborate setup like that. While there were moments where music was made to a direct cue, a lot of my input was based on the impression of the film through watching the rough cut."

What kind of musical direction did the director give you?
Angus: "It was a super interesting scene-by-scene description of how he felt about the mood and what he wanted the music to convey, but in really abstract terms that we could grasp. Something like: 'Imagine you have a 100-piece puzzle, but you have 1,000 pieces'. These descriptions were really helpful for us… they allowed a lot of interpretation."

WHAT ARE YOUR THREE FAVOURITE SOUNDTRACKS?

ANGUS

1. *"The Emerald Forest.* One of my first LPs I ever bought and still on heavy rotation."
2. *"Flash Gordon*, Queen. Just. Literally. Too. Good."
3. *"2001: A Space Odyssey."*

AARON

1. "*Theme From A Summer Place* is one of my favourite pieces of music."
2. The soundtrack for Wong Kar-wai's *In The Mood For Love* – its tension and sensuality enhances a beautiful film."
3. Bruce Langhorne's *The Hired Hand* helps the viewer to roam mentally around the movie."

How closely does your music relate to the movie's narrative?
Angus: "The goal is to enhance the narrative and progress the plot. It's an intense film with highly charged emotional points: the sound bears a lot of tension and release. Connecting with the main characters was essential for understanding the stakes at hand."

Is it important to you that the soundtrack stands up as an album?
Angus: "Yes and no. We were brought into this project to help Jeremy and his team realise their vision. I would've recorded hours of breathing, if that's what they needed. So as long as Jeremy genuinely felt the music helped his film then I'm happy."

***1/1* is due out on Mute on 20 July**

SHAFT-Music from the Soundtrack
Composed and Performed by ISAAC HAYES
MGM's
SHAFT

36

SHAFT

Isaac Hayes
Stax (1971)
£10

"Who's the black private dick that's a sex machine to all the chicks?" That'll be Shaft, John Shaft. The protagonist in one of the more famous Blaxploitation movies of the early 70s and the proud possessor of a funky kick-ass Oscar-winning theme tune. The accompanying soundtrack was a Stax double album and features Isaac Hayes' soulful score with help from R&B legends The Bar-Kays.

AIR
Original Motion Picture Score for
THE VIRGIN SUICIDES

31

THE VIRGIN SUICIDES

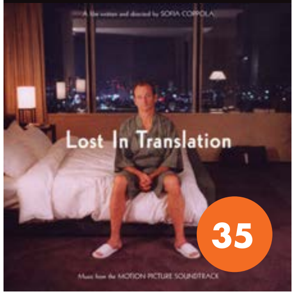
Air
Virgin (2000)
£25

Two years after *Moon Safari*, down-tempo Versailles twosome Air returned with a full soundtrack for the directing debut of Sofia Coppola. Due to forces unknown, much of Godin and Dunckel's eerie electronic prog-pop score was left on the cutting-room floor. However, the resulting soundtrack album revealed itself to be a modern cult classic.

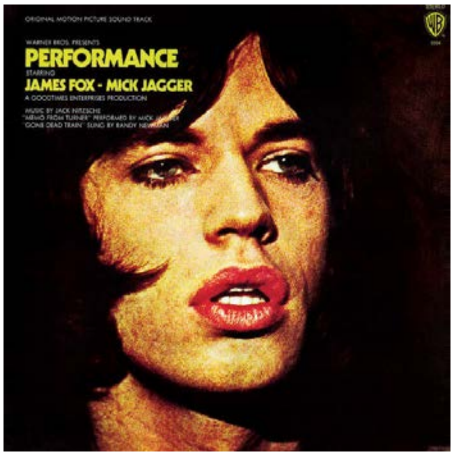
LOST IN TRANSLATION

Various Artists
Emperor Norton (2003)
£25/£35

My Bloody Valentine's Kevin Shields came out of hibernation to contribute four dreamy tracks to the soundtrack of Sofia Coppola's post-romantic Tokyo tale. The Jesus And Mary Chain (*Just Like Honey*), Phoenix, Air and Squarepusher add to the ethereal atmosphere – as does Bill Murray, with his beyond-laconic take on Roxy Music's *More Than This*.


Lost In Translation

35


PERFORMANCE
JAMES FOX - MICK JAGGER

34

PERFORMANCE

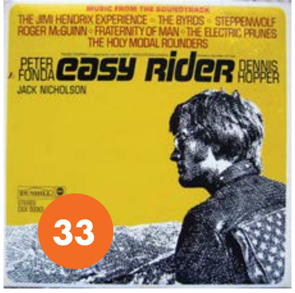
Various Artists
Warner Brothers (1970)
£40

Starring Mick Jagger as a tripped-out rock star, this dark-and-druggy UK cult classic has an eclectic soundtrack assembled by maverick US producer Jack Nitzsche. With assistance from Ry Cooder on slide guitar, the lead Stone contributes the memorable *Memo From Turner*, while other contributors range from a young Randy Newman to NY street rappers The Last Poets.

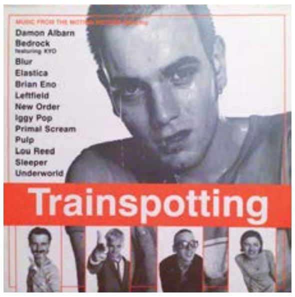
EASY RIDER

Various Artists
Stateside (1969)
£20

Director Dennis Hopper selected songs for the *Easy Rider* soundtrack based on nothing more than picking the records he was digging on the radio. With very few movies of the day using rock as their backing track, he had little trouble convincing the labels to let him use a number of era-defining tracks; meaning he was free to select some heavy-hitting artists, with Steppenwolf's *Born To Be Wild* and Hendrix's *If 6 Was 9* the standouts.


THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE • THE BYRDS • STEPPENWOLF
ROGER McGUINN • FRATERNITY OF MAN • THE ELECTRIC PRUNES
THE HOLY MODAL ROUNDERS
PETER FONDA
easy rider
DENNIS HOPPER
JACK NICHOLSON

33


Damon Albarn
Bedrock
Blur
Elastica
Brian Eno
Leftfield
New Order
Iggy Pop
Primal Scream
Pulp
Lou Reed
Sleeper
Underworld
Trainspotting

32

TRAINSPOTTING

Various Artists
EMI (1996)
£80

Much more than just a compilation of 'various artists' lumped together, the *Trainspotting* album captured the lager-infused zeitgeist of Britpop Britain. Primal Scream, Blur, Pulp, Iggy Pop and Underworld (*Born Slippy*) all make contributions. Rumour has it Oasis turned down the invitation to contribute a track, as Noel Gallagher thought it was about railway geeks.

30

THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN ARM

Elmer Bernstein
Brunswick (1956)
£25

Composed, conducted and arranged by the legendary Elmer Bernstein, the soundtrack to Sinatra's junkie drama is the quintessential 50s jazz score. The palpating arrangement interweaves big band and symphony, with brass, percussion and woodwind. All this and cool Saul Bass graphics on the album sleeve.

DECCA
THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN ARM

STANLEY KUBRICK'S
CLOCKWORK ORANGE

29

A CLOCKWORK ORANGE

Wendy Carlos
Warner Bros (1971)
£10

Electronic evangelist Wendy Carlos' heavily stylised Moog synth versions of classical music pieces, including famous works by Purcell, Rossini and, of course, 'Ludwig Van', dominate the *Clockwork Orange* soundtrack. The synthetic sound perfectly inhabits the futuristic world of Kubrick's nightmare vision. *March From A Clockwork Orange* was one of the first recorded songs to use a vocoder.

28

GET CARTER

Roy Budd
Cinephile (1998)
£25

Pianist and composer Roy Budd and the other members of his jazz trio recorded the score to Mike Hodges' Brit noir the hard way; live, direct to picture, and playing along to the film. He earned just £450. The magnificent main theme represents Michael Caine's journey up on the train to Newcastle from London. It was covered in sparse fashion by The Human League on *Dare*.

AN ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK RECORDING
GET CARTER

Drive
ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK
SCORE BY CLIFF MARTINEZ

27

DRIVE

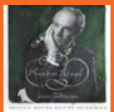
Cliff Martinez
Invada (2012)
£20

Before his reinvention as a Hollywood soundtrack artist, Cliff Martinez was the drummer in a number of bands including The Dickies, Red Hot Chili Peppers and even Captain Beefheart (*Ice Cream For Crow*). His faultlessly crafted, retro synth-pop soundtrack for the movie *Drive* was the one thing in the Ryan Gosling vehicle that was cooler than the pretty-boy actor himself.

CAMERAS. ROCK. ACTION

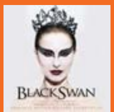
10 rock musicians who took time to compose themselves

In recent years, there has been a notable rise in the number of rock musicians contributing to soundtracks and blending the two mediums like never before. Here's our Top 10 guide to the movies' current go-to 'rock composers':



Jonny Greenwood
Starting with 2003's *Bodysong*, Radiohead's floppy-fringed guitar genius is a film composer of great distinction, and his association with director Paul Thomas Anderson has produced an impressive body of work; the most recent, *Phantom Thread*, won him an Oscar nomination.

Mica Levi
As a 'pop' performer, Mica Levi went by her stage name of Micachu and released a number of experimental albums with her band The Shapes. Her first major film score was a hauntingly memorable work for Jonathan Glazer's *Under The Skin*, starring Scarlett Johansson as the alien devourer of unsuspecting Scottish people. This was followed by the OST for the Jacqueline Kennedy biopic *Jackie*.



Clint Mansell
The Coventry-born composer was formerly the joint lead singer in indie-disco favourites Pop Will Eat Itself, but transformed into a bona fide Hollywood film composer. His partnership with Darren Aronofsky includes *Requiem For A Dream* and *Black Swan*. His score for Duncan Jones' *Moon* also stands out.

Jed Kurzel
Kurzel is the founding member of Aussie blues-rock duo The Mess Hall, but is better known for his film compositions. In 2011, he created the soundtrack for *Snowtown*, the directorial debut of his brother Justin. He's composed scores for *Assassin's Creed*, *Alien: Covenant* and *Slow West*, directed by The Beta Band's John Maclean.

Nick Cave and Warren Ellis
Since their initial soundtrack composition for Aussie outback Western *The Proposition*, longtime collaborators Cave and Ellis' shared aesthetic has delivered a richly textured slew of scores. Ellis also struck out on his own for the *Mustang* soundtrack.

ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK
STEVE McQUEEN
BULLITT
LALO SCHIFRIN

26

BULLITT

Lalo Schifrin
Warner Bros (1968)
£40

The classically trained Lalo Schifrin was jazz-giant Dizzy Gillespie's piano player and arranger before getting the Hollywood call. The Argentine's jazz-blues score for the Steve McQueen car-chase cop movie is as iceberg cool as it is drop-dead iconic. Schifrin's CV also contains *Mission: Impossible*, *Cool Hand Luke*, *Dirty Harry* and *Enter The Dragon*, but *Bullitt* is top of the pile.

MOON

Clint Mansell
Black Records (2009)
£15

The trajectory from co-frontman in Pop Will Eat Itself to Hollywood film-score royalty is one less taken, but it's the one Clint Mansell has trodden. The erstwhile grebo's soundtrack for Duncan Jones' sci-fi classic *Moon* is a moody, atmospheric soundscape reminiscent of Eno's ambient babblings with a slice of post-rock thrown in. It's a long way from *Beaver Patrol* or indie-disco hardy perennial *Def Con One*.

25

HEAD
MONKEESMONKEESMONKEESMONKEESMONKEESMONKEES

24

HEAD

The Monkees
RCA (1968)
£60

The Monkees' trippy movie was a car crash at the box office, but out of the psychedelic wreckage emerged a fantastic soundtrack album. The six songs, including Carole King's *Porpoise Song* and three originals from Michael Nesmith and Peter Tork, are interspersed with dialogue from the movie assembled by co-writer Jack Nicholson. A far cry from *I'm A Believer*, but no less enjoyable.

19

PAT GARRETT & BILLY THE KID

Bob Dylan
CBS (1973)

Sam Peckinpah's visionary yet troubled Western was butchered beyond recognition by the studio heads on its cinematic release, but thankfully, Bob Dylan's beautifully simple folky score stayed intact. Most famous for *Knocking On Heaven's Door*, the largely instrumental album saw Dylan reunited with early collaborator Bruce Langhorne.

Bob Dylan Soundtrack
PAT GARRETT & BILLY THE KID

One from the heart
TOM WAITS AND CRYSTAL GAYLE

18

ONE FROM THE HEART

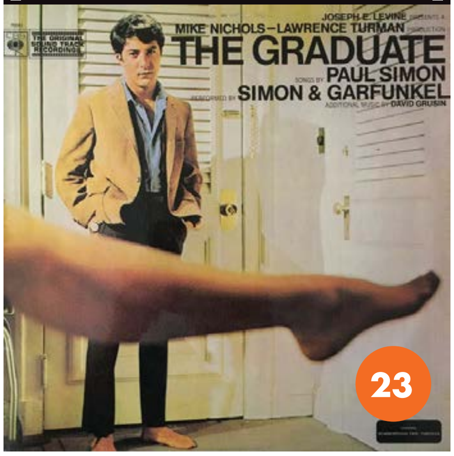
Tom Waits And Crystal Gayle
CBS (1982)
£10

Francis Ford Coppola's decision to approach Tom Waits to score his 1982 romantic fantasy was inspired. The jazzy barroom songs are works of sentimental splendour and affix themselves to the movie's narrative arc. The coupling of the gruff-voiced Waits and country chanteuse Crystal Gayle (Loretta Lynn's little sister) doesn't work on paper, but on vinyl, it's the real deal.

THE GRADUATE

Simon & Garfunkel
CBS (1968)
£10

The music of Simon & Garfunkel was a perfect fit for *The Graduate*, and the folk-rock duo's songs perfectly propel the movie's narrative. Only the infectious *Mrs. Robinson* was written for the film, but director Mike Nichols was such a devotee of the band he knew instinctively where the already-recorded material could be used.


MIKE NICHOLS–LAWRENCE TURMAN
THE GRADUATE
PAUL SIMON
SIMON & GARFUNKEL
DAVID GRUSIN

23

TRENT REZNOR AND ATTICUS ROSS
THE SOCIAL NETWORK

22

THE SOCIAL NETWORK

Trent Reznor And Atticus Ross
Null (2010)
£30, import

Having previously collaborated together on a number of Nine Inch Nails' albums, Trent Reznor and Brit composer Atticus Ross summoned up an artful cacophony of dark ambience for David Fincher's Facebook-founding movie *The Social Network*. As well as gaining a large number of likes on social media, it also picked up an Oscar for Best Original Score.

MIDNIGHT COWBOY

Various Artists
United Artists (1969)
£20

John Barry supervised the music and composed the memorable score to John Schlesinger's groundbreaking movie and for his trouble, picked up a Grammy for the theme tune. Harry Nilsson also got his hands on a Grammy for his hit-single cover of Fred Neil's *Everybody's Talkin'*. It could have been different, as Bob Dylan wrote *Lay Lady Lay* as the intended theme song, but didn't finish it in time.

ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SCORE
MIDNIGHT COWBOY
JOHN BARRY
NILSSON

21

ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

20

ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

John Carpenter
Record Makers (2003)
£35

Polymath auteur John Carpenter displayed his multitasking talents by not only directing this low-budget cult classic but also composing its seminal minimal electro score. His masterful use of stripped-down synth hooks, drum machines and drones was light years ahead of its time and has made an impact on legions of would-be score composers and fledgling electronica artists.

17

TAXI DRIVER

Bernard Herrmann
Arista (1976)
£15

Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* was a watershed moment in US cinema and its importance was sealed by the involvement of Bernard Herrmann, whose reputation as a film composer is unimpeachable. Having worked closely with Orson Welles and Alfred Hitchcock, Herrmann's brooding original score calls forth the seedy underbelly of Travis Bickle's New York City state of mind.

ROBERT DE NIRO
TAXI DRIVER
CYBILL SHEPHERD

THE WICKER MAN

16

THE WICKER MAN

Magnet &
Paul Giovanni
Silva Screen (2015)
£25

NY songwriter Paul Giovanni's compositions sit alongside a collection of ballads, jigs and reels to serve as the perfect accompaniment to Robin Hardy's dark tale of provincial paganism. The songs play a role in the movie's storytelling, with many of the characters performing their own signature theme. There are two vinyl versions of the movie (Trunk and Silva Screen) – both are a treat.

15

PULP FICTION

Various Artists
MCA (1994)
£20

Reservoir Dogs created the template, but it was *Pulp Fiction* that best established the Quentin Tarantino music-nerd approach to soundtracks. Just like Martin Scorsese before him, the former video-shop employee made art of incorporating musical sequences into his movies. Only here would Dick Dale rub shoulders with Dusty Springfield, Kool & The Gang and Urge Overkill.

MUSIC FROM THE MOTION PICTURE
PULP FICTION
a Quentin Tarantino film
10¢

TWIN PEAKS
FIRE WALK WITH ME

14

FIRE WALK WITH ME

Angelo Badalamenti
Warner Bros (1992)
£75

The movie prequel of David Lynch's darkly surreal TV series witnessed the classically trained Angelo Badalamenti presenting a hauntingly twisted score of languid jazz interspersed with outbursts of what can only be called pure ambient terror. Among the list of top-notch jazz session men credited on the album can be found a 'D Lynch', on percussion.

CAMERAS. ROCK. ACTION

Our guide to go-to 'rock composers' continues…

Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross
Trent Reznor's Hollywood debut was on the *Natural Born Killers* soundtrack for Oliver Stone. Since then, alongside his Nine Inch Nails producing partner, he's challenged the perception of what a film score can be. The pair's collaboration on David Fincher's *The Social Network* won them an Oscar, and subsequent OSTs include *The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo* and *Gone Girl*.

Z—ZACHARIAH

Heather McIntosh
The talented McIntosh was the house cellist for the Georgia-based Elephant 6 Collective and has also played live with Cat Power, Linda Perhacs and St. Vincent. Original scores are another string to her bow and 2012's creepy and controversial *Compliance* brought McIntosh's work forward to a wider audience, while her score for 2015's *Z For Zachariah* is utterly mesmerising.

THOR RAGNAROK

Mark Mothersbaugh
Mothersbaugh used to wear a flowerpot as a hat during his time as lead singer of Devo. These days, he cultivates a successful career as a film composer. He's worked extensively with filmmaker Wes Anderson, scoring many of his movies (*Bottle Rocket, Rushmore, The Royal Tenenbaums*). Mothersbaugh also composed the score for *The Lego Movie* and Marvel flick *Thor: Ragnarok*.

Dustin O'Halloran
Highly creative American pianist O'Halloran is one half of ambient-music duo A Winged Victory For The Sullen, and he is also very much in-demand as a film composer. He debuted on Sofia Coppola's *Marie Antoinette* and he's solidified his reputation on movies such as *Like Crazy, God's Own Country* and 2017's *Lion*, for which he received Oscar and Golden Globe nominations.

Jon Brion
Multi-instrumentalist Brion was in a number of shortlived rock bands before moving behind the production desk for artists such as Rufus Wainwright, Robyn Hitchcock, Aimee Mann and even Kanye West (*Late Registration*). He's also composed for a number of early Paul Thomas Anderson movies (*Hard Eight, Magnolia*), as well as, more recently, Greta Gerwig's coming-of-age tale, *Lady Bird*.

ARRIVAL
ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK
MUSIC BY JOHANN JOHANNSSON

13

ARRIVAL

Jóhann Jóhannsson
Deutsche Grammaphon (2016)
£18

Jóhann Jóhannsson's untimely death early this year robbed the movie world of one of its most original contemporary composers. His stylised approach typically merged traditional orchestration with elements of electronica, and his score for Denis Villeneuve's alien thriller *Arrival* is a delicate, moving slice of otherworldly wonder. The innovative Icelander will be sadly missed.

PARIS, TEXAS

Ry Cooder
Warner Bros (1985)
£20

Musical survivor Ry Cooder provided Wim Wenders' transcendental art house tragi-road movie with a beautiful score. His mournfully plaintive slide guitar on the movie's memorable theme tune conjures up not only the wide-open spaces of the Texan landscape, but also evokes the pain of Harry Dean Stanton's badly broken heart.

ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK—MUSIC BY RY COODER
PARIS, TEXAS
12

11

THE HIRED HAND

Bruce Langhorne
Scissor Tail
£20

Back in his 60s Greenwich Village days, Bruce Langhorne played session guitar for Bob Dylan and many other luminaries, and was the living incarnation of his *Mr. Tambourine Man*. His most essential moment on vinyl, however, is his beautiful and wildly redolent work for the soundtrack of Peter Fonda's existential Western, *The Hired Hand*.

6

SUSPIRIA

Goblin
EMI (1977)
£40

A huge chunk of Italian prog-rock outfit Goblin's output was recorded for the horror-film soundtracks of cult director Dario Argento, with none finer than 1977's *Suspiria*. With a plot revolving around a coven of murderous witches, the movie is truly terrifying and, appropriately enough, so too is Goblin's powerful heavy-riffing score – packing triple the menace of Sabbath.

Goblin
Suspiria

ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK
THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE UGLY
Music by ENNIO MORRICONE
5

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

Ennio Morricone
United Artists (1966)
£10

Master composer Ennio Morricone's inventively idiosyncratic scores often contained recurring motifs such as gunfire, whistling, whip cracks and even the odd snatch of yodeling. His work on Sergio Leone's 1966 Spaghetti Western is hugely important to the movie's narrative and is considered one of the most influential and instantly recognisable soundtracks of all time.

10

O BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU?

Various Artists
Lost Highway (2003)
£20

Set during the Great Depression of the 1930s, the OST to the Coen Brothers' loose retelling of Homer's *Odyssey* faithfully recreates the country, bluegrass, folk, gospel and blues of the era. Under the auspices of T Bone Burnett, the old-time music plays a major role in the film and often drives the action. Alison Krauss, Gillian Welch and Emmylou Harris lend their considerable vocal talents.

O BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU?

9

HELP!

The Beatles
Parlophone (1965)
£100 (first press, mono)

THE BEATLES
HELP!

The second Beatles movie was a bit of a flimsy potboiler, but the soundtrack is rammed with early Lennon and McCartney classics. This was the Fab Four growing out their mop tops and readying themselves for the sonic adventures to come. Rather than spelling out the album title, the iconic cover actually shows them sending out the semaphore signal for 'NUJV'.

8

THE GODFATHER

Nino Rota
Paramount (1972)
£20

Already a film composer of great renown for his work with Federico Fellini, notably 1960's *La Dolce Vita*, Nino Rota offered Francis Ford Coppola a score he couldn't refuse. His richly evocative and deeply iconic composition was the perfect backdrop to the director's Mafiosi masterpiece. Rota's work on the sequel earned him (and Carmine Coppola) an Oscar.

The Godfather

Purple Rain
Prince and the Revolution

7

PURPLE RAIN

Prince And The Revolution
Warner Bros (1984)
£25 (purple vinyl)

The blockbuster soundtrack to the vaguely autobiographical film of the same name saw Prince assemble an amazing collection of songs brimming with his talent for showmanship and raunch. This seamless mix of funk, pop, R&B and rock proved to be an irresistible cocktail, and provided the artist then still known as Prince with the third-biggest-selling soundtrack album of all time.

4

THE HARDER THEY COME

Various Artists
Island Records (1972)
£25

Jimmy Cliff not only played the rude-boy protagonist in Perry Henzell's rough-hewn directorial masterpiece, he also contributed a sizeable chunk of the fantastic soundtrack. Other contributions were cherry-picked from the cream of early Jamaican reggae with Toots And The Maytals, The Melodians, The Slickers and Desmond Dekker all leaving an indelibly joyful mark.

Jimmy Cliff
THE HARDER THEY COME

THE ORIGINAL MOVIE SOUND TRACK
SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER

3

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER

Various Artists
RSO (1977)
£10

Much of the zeitgeist-tapping 70s disco flick was already in the can before the Bee Gees' involvement in the project had even begun. And while Travolta may have shot his 'action scenes' dancing to Boz Scaggs and Stevie Wonder, it was the brothers Gibb who appeared on the mega-selling soundtrack; alongside shake-ass classics from Kool And The Gang and The Trammps.

2

SUPER FLY

Curtis Mayfield
Buddah (1972)
£25 (gatefold)

Curtis Mayfield's third solo album after leaving The Impressions is a serious work of soulful wonder that leaves the easily forgettable Blaxploitation movie that inspired it flailing down amongst the dead men. Regarded as trailblazing on release for confronting the issues of the day, it contains some of his greatest songs, including *Pusherman*, *Freddie's Dead* and the masterly title track.

CURTIS MAYFIELD
Super Fly

1

BLADE RUNNER
VANGELIS

BLADE RUNNER

Vangelis
Warners (1994)
£20

The soundtrack to Ridley Scott's sci-fi noir finally saw the neon light of day 12 years after the movie's release. During that time, the reputation of Vangelis' darkly melodic electronic score had reached mythic proportions – but it was worth the wait. The irresistible combination of classical composition and synthesiser soundscapes was to hold an inestimable sway over a new generation of film scorers. ●

INVADA RECORDS

South Bristol's Invada Records is the label and recording studio founded by Geoff Barrow of Portishead. A hard-working operation concerned only with the music, Invada is at the heart of the film-score resurgence. *Long Live Vinyl* sits down with label manager Redg Weeks to find out the Invada story…

Interview Luke & Tom Friend

How did Invada Records start?
"Geoff Barrow came back from Australia after taking a small period of time out of the UK and got together with Fat Paul, who's a local entrepreneur, venue owner, gig promoter and a guy who'd previously had a number of small, yet successful, independent Bristol record labels – and between the two of them, they founded Invada. The remit was to release pretty much anything they wanted, no matter how obscure. Essentially, 'we put out what we want, when we want'. This was around 2002, 2003 I believe."

From those beginnings, how did Invada become the label it is now? Would you even describe Invada as a soundtrack label?
"I would and I wouldn't. I would say that we've become synonymous with soundtracks over the past five years, but we never set out to change the format of what Invada was about. It's just happened organically, through a series of events, which includes Geoff getting into writing film scores with Ben Salisbury."

Redg Weeks

What was the first release that really signified the label's move into the new territory of film scores and soundtracks?
"I joined the label in 2009 but the real turning point wasn't until 2011 to 2012, when there was talk of us bringing out *Drokk*, which was the project Geoff and Ben had just done with 2000 AD comics. I had also brought in the *Drive* film score at around the same time, so we had two relatively big records that were film scores and I think those two paved the way for the label to start to consider putting out more soundtracks and scores…"

***Drive* was a big one, wasn't it?**
"It was massive. I saw the film around October 2011. People were already buying the music on iTunes, and those buying it were across a broad spectrum: your average Joe, people who'd buy Aphex Twin, Orbital, Prodigy, bands like that, as well as people who were into film soundtracks, and then people like me, who were listening to a lot of different stuff. The *Drive* soundtrack just ticked a lot of boxes. So I reached out to the film company and we did the deal really quickly."

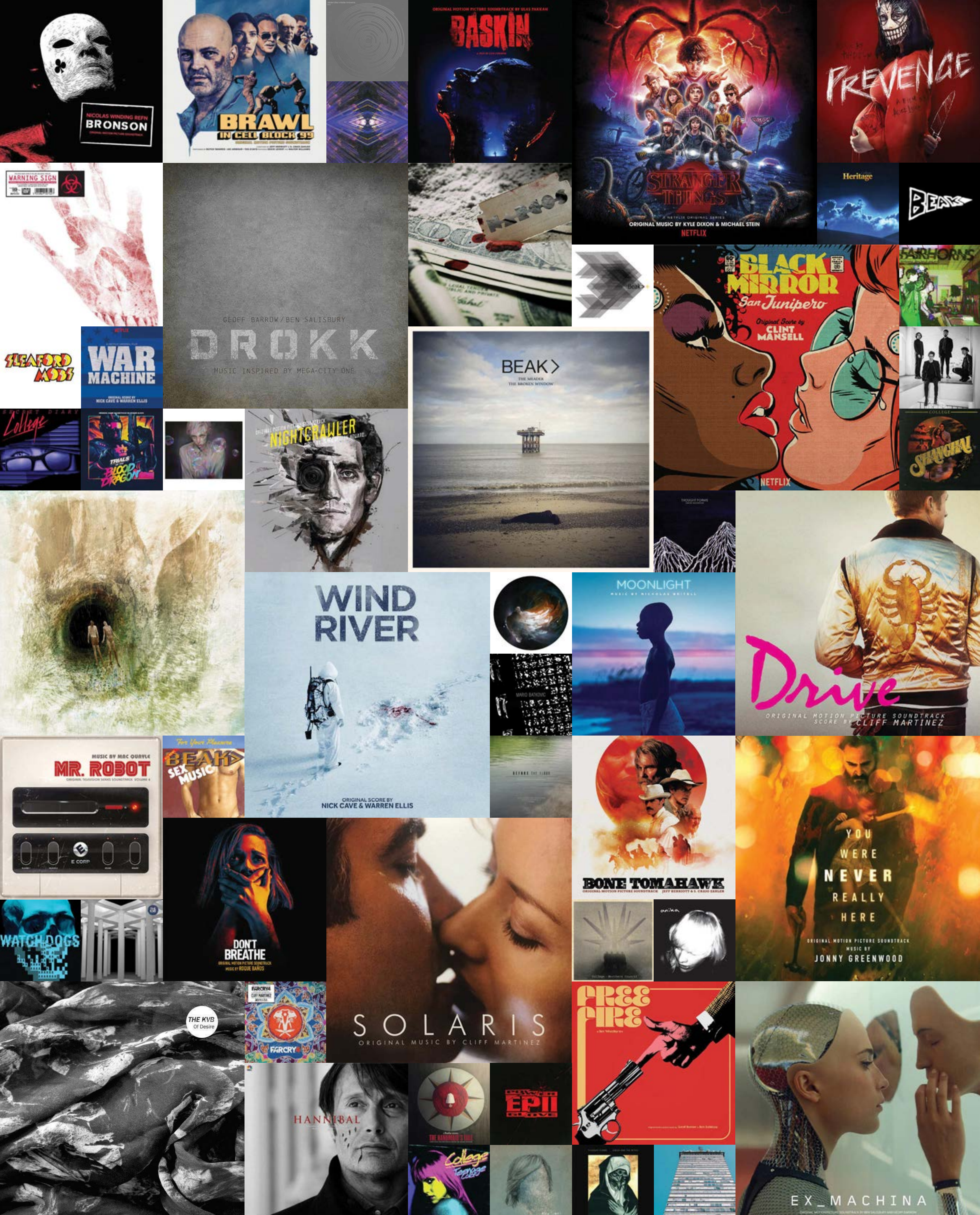
At that point, it didn't exist anywhere on vinyl?
"No – it was on CD and iTunes at the time."

What part of your brain goes 'I think this should be on vinyl'?
"I'd been into soundtracks and scores for a while and at the same time, I was relatively bored with contemporary bands. I was just looking for something else – something that wasn't dance music or faceless electronic music, or the traditional band format; I was just bored of it all. I'd been listening to soundtracks, but without being an aficionado. I had my favourites and I kept dipping my toes in – I was familiar with Cliff Martinez through *Solaris,* and then *Drive* came out – it was just the combination of the film itself, which I've probably watched close to 30 times and still blows my mind every time I see it, Cliff's score and obviously the licensed tracks such as College's *A Real Hero* and Chromatics' *Tick Of The Clock*."

So you're watching it, you know it's Cliff Martinez, and you're thinking 'this should be available to a wider audience'?
"Correct. I knew when I saw the film and when I heard the score that this was something we should be involved with. I thought it was incredible… with the BEAK> records we'd been doing there was an element of this cool synth stuff, so I knew that BEAK> fans would love it… and of course, I loved it, too."

So it was an old-school A&R approach then? No different from going and watching a band and thinking 'other people are going to like this'?
"It was exactly that. And it changed everything for me, because from that moment on, every time I went to the cinema I would make notes, go back and check if the music was on iTunes, or on Spotify, see whether there had been a vinyl release. I wasn't looking at *Drive* from a long-term business point of view, more that old-school approach, going on a gut feeling and just see what happens. Luckily for the label and me, it did connect massively with people. I remember texting Geoff, who was on tour with Portishead at the time, and he'd been talking to Ade (Utley, Portishead guitarist)

▶


NICOLAS WINDING REFN
BRONSON
BRAWL IN CELL BLOCK 99
ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK BY ULAS PAKKAN
BASKIN
STRANGER THINGS 2
A NETFLIX ORIGINAL SERIES
ORIGINAL MUSIC BY KYLE DIXON & MICHAEL STEIN
NETFLIX
PREVENGE
WARNING SIGN
GEOFF BARROW / BEN SALISBURY
DROKK
MUSIC INSPIRED BY MEGA-CITY ONE
Heritage
BEAK>
SLEAFORD MODS
WAR MACHINE
NETFLIX
ORIGINAL SCORE BY NICK CAVE & WARREN ELLIS
BLACK MIRROR
San Junipero
Original Score by CLINT MANSELL
NETFLIX
FAIRHORNS
BEAK>
THE MEADER
THE BROKEN WINDOW
SECRET DIARY
College
TRIALS OF THE BLOOD DRAGON
NIGHTCRAWLER
THOUGHT FORMS
WIND RIVER
ORIGINAL SCORE BY NICK CAVE & WARREN ELLIS
MOONLIGHT
MUSIC BY NICHOLAS BRITELL
MARIO BATKOVIC
Drive
ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK SCORE BY CLIFF MARTINEZ
COLLEGE
SHANGHAI
MUSIC BY MAC QUAYLE
MR. ROBOT
ORIGINAL TELEVISION SERIES SOUNDTRACK VOLUME 4
E CORP
For Your Pleasure
BEAK>
SEX MUSIC
BEFORE THE FLOOD
DON'T BREATHE
MUSIC BY ROQUE BAÑOS
BONE TOMAHAWK
ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK JEFF HERRIOTT & S. CRAIG ZAHLER
YOU WERE NEVER REALLY HERE
ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK
MUSIC BY JONNY GREENWOOD
WATCH DOGS
College - Northern Council
anika
THE KVB Of Desire
FARCRY4
SOLARIS
ORIGINAL MUSIC BY CLIFF MARTINEZ
FREE FIRE
HANNIBAL
THE HANDMAID'S TALE
POWER EPII GLOVE
College Teenage Color
EX_MACHINA

Geoff Barrow, founder of the Invada label (left)

about it. Geoff called me from Australia, and I told him 'I hope you don't mind, but I've signed it'. The deal was done."

So around this time, was there anyone else doing soundtracks in a similar way?

"I'd been spending a lot of time in London and would frequent Rough Trade East, where Spencer from Death Waltz was manager. We'd chat a lot during this period about each other's records. At this time, Death Waltz were releasing John Carpenter and Fabio Frizzi records, causing lots of interest from all quarters. This really ignited what became a huge culture of film scores pressed as deluxe vinyl packages."

So after *Drive*, what was the label's next big release?

"After *Drive*, there was a lot of attention on the label. I'd spoken to Cliff Martinez a couple of times, and it became apparent that everybody believed what I already knew, that *Solaris* was his untapped masterpiece. So I wanted to put it out. It happened through Clint Mansell [former Pop Will Eat Itself frontman and film-score composer], we were talking at the time, and he put me in touch with a friend of his – Areli Quirarte, a music supervisor at Fox Music.

"After some back and forth with executives, Areli came back to us with the good news. So we released *Solaris* – which, to be honest with you, as much as *Drive* was a game changer, *Solaris* was the one for me. It was the one that I took more personal satisfaction from because it was, at the time, my favourite film score. Probably still is."

Was that available on vinyl anywhere at the time?

"No, it had never been on vinyl."

So you've managed to get *Drive* and *Solaris* on vinyl for the first time?

"Correct. And truthfully, when *Solaris* hit the record stores, people maybe looked at us a little differently. We were no longer the label that 'got lucky with *Drive*'."

Was it important to follow *Drive* with something of equal significance?

"It was, but I mean the *Drokk* record came out at about the same time as *Drive*, and that was a massive indie success. People love that record; it sold out really quickly, we pressed a thousand and that sold out, then we did another thousand and that sold out. It's one of those records to this day that really resonates. I knew that we were doing well with that record when we saw Clint Mansell wearing a Drokk T-shirt in his press shots!"

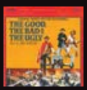
How did the *Stranger Things* release come about?

"I stumbled across the series through my nine-year-old son, who was trying to watch it. He's always trying to sneak-watch horror films – he loves *Jaws* – so I came across it through him and then binge watched the series, did the whole series in a night. Like everyone, I was blown away by the music, and I called up Brian from Lakeshore (an independent music division of film-production company Lakeshore Entertainment), who I'd got to know through the *Drive* project. So *Stranger Things* was a collaboration with them…"

GEOFF BARROW'S TOP 5 SOUNDTRACKS

Assault On Precinct 13
John Carpenter

"I just think it's the best example of something that's minimalist and still commercial – it's not weird, but it's totally brilliant. With about four or five sounds, he's able to score a whole film. It's just utterly brilliant. It's been one of the biggest influences on my music."



The Good, The Bad And The Ugly
Ennio Morricone

"It's kind of the other direction from *Assault On Precinct 13* – it's got everything but the kitchen sink in it, from penny whistles to cannons! Morricone thought the film was funny in places, so put a comedic element into the score, which I didn't ever quite get… but you've got a score that's heavily theme-based. It's just a classic."

Planet Of The Apes
Jerry Goldsmith

"He was doing things with echoes, with orchestras… the score for the chase scene in the film is immaculately crafted. It's absolutely huge."

A Clockwork Orange
Wendy Carlos

"It's easy to imagine *A Clockwork Orange* with completely different music… if you were given the scripts and were asked to score it, would you think 'really hyper-synth versions of Beethoven'? You wouldn't, would you? And that's the point. If you go and see *Annihilation* or *Ex Machina*, they're pretty much scored as you'd imagine them to be. They fit. But *A Clockwork Orange* is the opposite – and it's just full of talented players. It's unbelievable. It's insane. It just wasn't being done like that."

Tommy
The Who

"It just freaked me the fuck out! It's because of *Tommy* that I've got a soft spot for musicals. I actually like *Jesus Christ Superstar*. I like *Grease*. I remember seeing it when I was young, thinking 'what the hell?'. It's just nuts…"

BLACK MIRROR
MASS LETS YOU DO IT
MASS IS A FRIEND
MEN AGAINST FIRE
ORIGINAL SCORE BY
BEN SALISBURY GEOFF BARROW
NETFLIX

NETFLIX
STRANGER THINGS

And did you sense that it was going to be a success?

"It was like *Drive* was happening all over again. *Stranger Things* was a box-ticker and another example of when the stars align. The *San Junipero* [*Black Mirror*] score was the same. I watched the episode on the night Netflix screened the show. The second the credits came up at the end, I texted Clint to tell him I thought it was an incredible piece of music. Within hours, there were literally hundreds of tweets from people praising the score."

And how about *Ex Machina*, another example of Invada's seminal releases?

"With *Ex Machina*, I just knew we had something. I'd heard the recordings, I'd seen the early incarnations of the film with Geoff, but when I saw the full screening at the BFI, I knew it was going to do really well. I just know through experience when a score's going to do really well and when it's not… it's an intuition, I think."

So with that in mind, what makes a classic Invada film score release – what do you look for?

"In an ideal world, you'd have 10 *Drive* records each year – great film, great score, great artwork, great director and a huge fanbase, which is also a very cool fanbase. The reality is that those releases are few and far between. Today, when we hear something we like, both Geoff and I, we'll look at the film, the way its been received. But we have worked on records where the film didn't do that well at the box office, but the film score took on a life of its own… BEAK>'s soundtrack for *Couple In A Hole*, for example, just took on a life of its own – with *FACT* magazine suggesting that the score should have been nominated for an Oscar…"

So how can a soundtrack help a film?

"I think that most of the standout film scores and soundtracks people reference all have the same characteristics – they give the movie a whole new level of personality and make the experience of watching the film a lot more memorable. Invada has just released the Lynne Ramsay-directed *You Were Never Really Here* score by Jonny Greenwood. I heard the score before I saw the film and couldn't believe how good it was as a standalone piece of music. A few months later, after a screening, I came out of the cinema and all you could hear was people praising the music and saying how well it worked."

While we're on the subject of new projects, what else has Invada got planned for the coming year? Will there be more scores? Any non-film-related stuff?

"Yes, both. And it's important for us to continue to do both. We're known for soundtracks, but also for Geoff's work outside of Portishead. BEAK> are a massive part of the label; The KVB are, too. So we've got the third BEAK> record coming out and the new KVB record. Invada has to remain open-minded, and non-conformist, and I think that while we always want to release film scores, if nothing comes along – but at the same time there are 10 bands we like and who we feel we can do something with – then that's what we'll do."

MOST STANDOUT FILM SCORES AND SOUNDTRACKS HAVE THE SAME CHARACTERISTICS: THEY GIVE THE MOVIE A NEW LEVEL OF PERSONALITY

WIND RIVER
ORIGINAL SCORE BY NICK CAVE & WARREN ELLIS

Ooh, baby... do you know what that's worth?
Ooh, heaven is a place on earth!

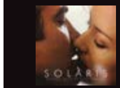
SOLARIS
ORIGINAL MUSIC BY CLIFF MARTINEZ

REDG WEEKS' TOP 5 SOUNDTRACKS

PARIS, TEXAS

Paris Texas
Ry Cooder

"I watched the film with my father when I was around 12 or 13 and at the time, was learning to play the guitar. My dad was a jazz aficionado and rarely strayed from the path on his musical purchases. However, he bought this soundtrack and it was played relentlessly at home for about a year. I attempted to play like Ry Cooder, but ultimately failed."



Solaris
Cliff Martinez

"My favourite electronic score. I first heard this after watching the film, which truthfully, I didn't really enjoy. I picked up a CD from eBay after trying to track it down through record shops. To this day, I don't know whether it's a bootleg or legit! But I did pay about £40 for it. One of the highlights of my career in the music industry was getting an email from 20th Century Fox approving our request to release this on vinyl."

Suburbia
Various Artists/ Alex Gibson

"One of the most important films of my teenage years turned into one of the most important records in my collection. There isn't anything particularly striking about the Alex Gibson score as a standalone listen, but paired with the four punk-rock tracks, the soundtrack comes alive. It was released in 1984 and is very much of its time."

Dead Man
Neil Young

"I was never a huge Neil Young fan nor a collector of his music like a lot of my friends were. This, surprisingly, was the gateway for my exploration of his catalogue, which has now become a staple part of my music consumption."

The Omen
Jerry Goldsmith

"I hold *The Omen* up as the greatest horror film I've ever seen. The score is a work of genius and truly captures everything that the film was meant to reflect. Truly haunting, while remaining utterly beautiful at the same time. Everyone knows Goldsmith scores are to be savoured, but this is his finest hour."

And it's the open-mindedness that led you to the soundtracks in the first place?

"Exactly. And I think film soundtracks are just getting more interesting, with more interesting people getting hired. Look at Kyle Dixon and Michael Stein from *Stranger Things*; two guys from an electronic band in Austin, and they've turned in one of the best scores of all time. It's encouraging, to say the least."

What part do you think the vinyl format has had in helping to drive the interest in soundtracks and scores?

"It's interesting, because probably of the last 12 or so Invada film-score releases, we've done a black vinyl version not to be cheap, but to actually just say 'this is about the music, the score, the soundtrack' and not about any gimmicks, the 'deluxe' this, the 'deluxe' that. People certainly want that collectability. People expect that with film scores, but the longer I've been doing this and the more experience I've gotten, I'm just as happy releasing something simple."

Can you give us an example of that?

"The Nick Cave & Warren Ellis *Wind River* record. I thought that record looked beautiful. It was a great sleeve, heavyweight black vinyl, with beautiful artwork and nothing more. It didn't need to be tricked up. I didn't want to spruce it up. Some records do warrant that, but we've always tried to make it about the music. That's very important to us. We'll continue to do the coloured vinyl, the splatter vinyl, because certain releases warrant it. But sometimes, a release just requires a more fundamental approach."

WE'VE COPPED A LOT OF FLAK FOR KEEPING RECORDS IN PRINT, BUT WHY SHOULD PEOPLE BE DEPRIVED OF THE *DRIVE* SOUNDTRACK?

And it's important to ensure your records are accessible…

"Yes, which is why we're not just about soundtracks on vinyl; we want to keep it on all formats. We don't want to do the uber-limited things, not because we want the sales, but because we want to keep the records in print, just like we would a band. I don't believe in having a small run and the record never to be re-released."

So you don't make the music a collector's piece, rather just the format?

"Exactly that. If it's luminous green, with zebra stripes embossed on the vinyl and it plays inside to out on 78rpm, then make that limited, but keep another version available. We've copped a lot of flak for keeping records in print, but why should people be deprived of the *Drive* soundtrack? It's an important record, just as important to me as *Nevermind* by Nirvana or Pink Floyd's *The Wall*; it's a game-changer and should be available. There's no way you wouldn't be able to buy Nirvana or Pink Floyd again. So there's a market for the collectible stuff, and there's room for it, but it's not what we're about."

So ultimately the music's more important than the format?

"Yes, I do believe that. In the end, it's the music that really matters." ●

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AVID

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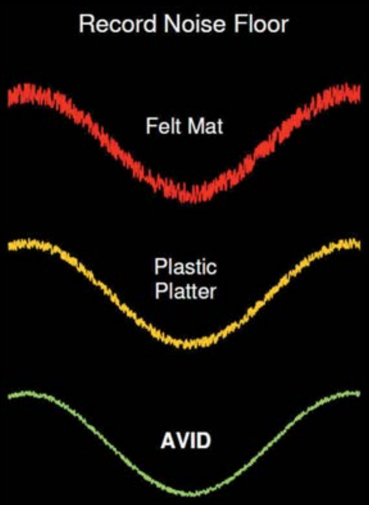

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THE ESSENTIAL

THE WHO

They probably could have been more prolific, they probably should have enjoyed more chart success. But no matter – as **Sean Egan** demonstrates in this rundown of rarities and must-have vinyl, The Who's varied back catalogue is a many-splendoured thing…

On the surface, The Who made no sense. They stayed together through thick and thin, despite the fact that they couldn't stand the sight of each other. In the 60s, they were the rawest, most visceral live act in rock, but their record releases alternated between quirky pop singles and grand, intellectual suites. And – have we got this far without mentioning it? – they carried on playing into their dotage, despite claiming in their most famous song that they hoped they died before they got old.

Of course, The Who were prepared to tolerate each other because each knew that they would never find better musicians to work with. Meanwhile, their contradictions were overlooked by their devoted fanbase because of the superior, groundbreaking music made possible by the musical melding of their irreplaceable talents.

WHO ARE THEY?

Roger Daltrey is a vocalist who can alternate between tremulous delicacy and gravel-throated belligerence. Pete Townshend is a songwriting genius whose craft spans three-minute pop gems and intricate, multi-song narratives. John Entwistle was the Quiet One in personality only; his bass playing always prominent in the soundscape, and always excellent. Underpinning it all was Keith Moon, whose drumming was as massive and hyperactive as his personality.

The nucleus of the group coalesced in 1961, with Moon completing the classic line-up in '64. They began as R&B-covers merchants, but Townshend blossomed so quickly as a composer that by 1965, he'd written an anthem that genuinely encapsulated the feelings of contemporary Western youth. Evolving in leaps and bounds, in 1969, he changed history with a rock opera that made popular music worthy of the attention of the intelligentsia.

The Who's catalogue is surprisingly slim for such a long-lived and venerated ensemble. Nonetheless, what does exist is highly desired and studded with intriguing rarities. Our list is chronological, and rarest entries refer to UK releases, unless otherwise stated.

CAN'T EXPLAIN
(Peter Townshend)
DECCA
31725
(115,396)
Champion Music Corp. (BMI) (2:05)
THE WHO
Vocal With Instrumental Accompaniment
PRODUCED BY SHEL TALMY
RECORDED IN ENGLAND

40

CAN'T EXPLAIN/BALD HEADED WOMAN

(1965)

Producer Shel Talmy suggested the public-domain cover on the B-side of The Who's debut single because he knew how to claim the publishing. On the A-side, Townshend proffered an anthem of inarticulacy. The record was first released by US Decca at the end of 1964, then withdrawn, corrected (the "I" was dropped from the A-side's title) and reissued. It's possible to pick up that first pressing cheaply, as many dealers are unaware of its uniqueness.

£ *Rarest* 1964 Decca (US) **£50**

anyway, anyhow, anywhere
DADDY ROLLING STONE
Brunswick
0 5935
the who

39

ANYWAY, ANYHOW, ANYWHERE/DADDY ROLLING STONE

(1965)

The second Who single was a libertarian anthem, but was most notable for being drenched in the feedback Townshend had made his stage trademark. Eddie Phillips of The Creation, and even The Roadrunners, have claims to be pioneers in turning this technical fault into an asset, but Townshend did the most to popularise it. Despite its atonal sections, this became the second Who top-tenner.

£ *Rarest* 1965 Brunswick (Denmark) **£240**

THE WHO
My Generation (Shake)
Shout and Shimmy (Shake)
DECCA
CLUB EDITION EX LIBRIS

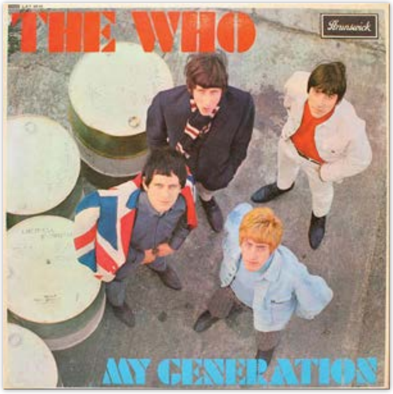
38

MY GENERATION/ SHOUT AND SHIMMY

(1965)

The blitzkrieg record that completed music's all-time most uncompromising opening trio of releases, with the possible exception of the Sex Pistols' opening salvo. Daltrey sneering that he hoped he died before he got old was shocking enough, but instructing his elders to f-f-fade away was within two syllables of telling them to f-f-f–off. Townshend intones the title line surreally metronomically, and Entwistle drops the first-ever bass solo.

£ *Rarest* **1965 Decca (Germany, club edition) £55**



37

MY GENERATION

(1965)

The Who's debut LP came as a disappointment to some: there was a surfeit of incongruous covers, the abrasiveness was toned down via the incorporation of Nicky Hopkins' frilly piano and the insurrectionary power of the title track was diluted by being surrounded by Townshend-penned, trivial teenage soap operas. That said, many more consider it a bull-nosed classic, lifted high by the breathless *The Kids Are Alright*. Legal issues bizarrely kept it out of print for many years.

£ *Rarest* **1965 Brunswick £70**

reaction
MADE IN ENGLAND
Fabulous Music Ltd.
591001
THE WHO
CIRCLES
(Townshend)
A New Action Production

36

SUBSTITUTE/ VARIOUS B-SIDES

(1966)

A quarter-century before *Creep*, this 45 explored self-loathing in a far more rousing and witty way. *Substitute*'s multiple B-sides are of great interest. The first, *Circles*, is the most sought after. The number was re-recorded and renamed *Instant Party* when the ousted Talmy injuncted the record. Another injunction and the B-side became a Graham Bond Organisation recording called (pointedly) *Waltz For A Pig*.

£ *Rarest* **1966 Reaction (with *Circle*) £11**

421051
I'M A BOY
Polydor
IN THE CITY
The Who

35

I'M A BOY/IN THE CITY

(1966)

If *Substitute* was the first indication of Townshend's more nuanced, subversive gifts, *I'm A Boy* was where he revealed his penchant for the perverse. The A-side was – it seems fair to say – the first song about enforced transvestitism to crack the Top Five. Townshend had previously held back from proffering Daltrey such fare because he thought he only wanted to throw macho shapes. The Entwistle/ Moon B-side would provide a title for the first single from Who acolytes The Jam.

£ *Rarest* **1966 Polydor (Norway) £140**

Polydor
HAPPY JACK
I'VE BEEN AWAY
THE WHO

34

HAPPY JACK/ I'VE BEEN AWAY

(1966)

The B-side is a country-inflected piece of fluff from Entwistle. The A-side is higher quality, but weirdly apropos of nothing, detailing the life of an eccentric on the Isle Of Man who refuses to let ridicule spoil his mood. Moon's drumming is spectacular, but his singing was so bad he was banned from the vocal booth and audibly told off by Townshend ("I saw ya!") for venturing into it. DJs are still caught out by his cry after the apparent ending.

£ *Rarest* **1966 Polydor (Greece) £350**

READY STEADY
WHO

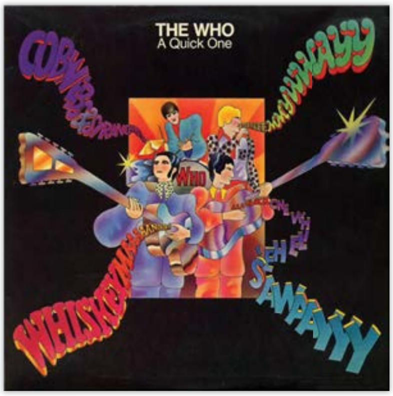
33

READY STEADY WHO

(1966)

The title of The Who's first EP alluded to the mod-friendly TV show *Ready Steady Go!*, but the five studio recordings it contained had no connection to Cathy McGowan and co, contrary to the sleevenotes. The A-side featured two Townshend originals: *Disguises* was a shuffling, surreal number about identity-shifting; the already released *Circles* was the first track to reveal Entwistle's facility for wind instruments. The B-side featured a trio of jokey covers: *Batman Theme*, *Bucket "T"* and *Barbara Ann*.

£ *Rarest* **1966 Reaction £25**


THE WHO
A Quick One

32

A QUICK ONE

(1966)

The Who's second album was sabotaged from the get-go: all band members contributed songs, so as to procure them publishing advances. Inevitably, the offerings of Messrs Daltrey, Entwistle and Moon paled in comparison to those of Townshend. He not only more or less invented the rock opera with the closing nine-minute suite *A Quick One, While He's Away*, but also purveyed an exquisite three-minute pop number, *So Sad About Us*, criminally overlooked for single release.

Rarest **1966 Polydor (New Zealand) £90**

THE WHO
Polydor
Special Announcement
"THE LAST TIME" and "UNDER MY THUMB"

30

THE LAST TIME/ UNDER MY THUMB

(1967)

In June 1967, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards were imprisoned on drugs charges after a court case which felt like a trial of the entire counterculture. The Who showed solidarity with this single, the first of a planned monthly sequence of Jagger/Richards covers rendered unnecessary when Jagger's sentence was reduced to a conditional discharge and Richards' conviction quashed. Townshend covered on bass for a honeymooning Entwistle.

Rarest **1967 Polydor (France) £60**

HEINZ
BAKED BEANS
Odorono
THE WHO SELL OUT
THE WHO SELL OUT

28

THE WHO SELL OUT

(1967)

The burning sense of injustice on the part of the young at the 1967 outlawing of pirate radio stations is now a fading memory, but Townshend responded to it by sequencing The Who's third LP like a radio show, with jingles linking the often jingle-like songs. 500 copies came with a free poster, but the most sought-after version is a Japanese edition with a lyric insert and essay, difficult to find in mint condition because of its thin sleeve.

Rarest **1967 Polydor (Japan, stereo) £680**

Polydor
THE WHO
リリーのおもかげ
PICTURES OF LILY
ザ・フー
ドクター・ドクター
DOCTOR, DOCTOR
Polydor Records

31

PICTURES OF LILY/ DOCTOR, DOCTOR

(1967)

How do you top a record about a boy being forced into skirts and make-up? Why, with a song about masturbating, of course. When the narrator complains of insomnia to his father, liberal-minded pater provides him pin-ups of stage actress Lillie [sic] Langtry. The lad is later devastated to be informed that the object of his desire has been dead for 40 years. The first UK Who release on Track, the label of their managers Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp.

Rarest **1967 Polydor (Japan) £110**

THE WHO
I CAN SEE FOR MILES
SOMEONE'S COMING
Polydor

29

I CAN SEE FOR MILES/ SOMEONE'S COMING

(1967)

After a run of quirky pop singles, this was the first reminder to the public since *My Generation* of the power heard in Who live performances. Townshend was devastated when this concoction of slashing chords, gigantic drum rolls and denunciations of a lover in quasi-mystical terms only just crept into the British Top 10. He'd have to get used to such disappointment: bizarrely, The Who never had a recognised No. 1.

Rarest **1967 Polydor (Norway) £35**

TRACK RECORD
POLYDOR RECORDS LTD.
Fabulous
604023 A
℗ 1968
604023
DOGS
(Townshend)
THE WHO
Produced by Kit Lambert
Executive Producer:
Chris Stamp
MADE IN Gt.BRITAIN

27

DOGS/CALL ME LIGHTNING

(1968)

With Townshend toiling on his magnum opus *Tommy*, and with the band bleeding money through their auto-destructive stage routine, The Who had to keep up a release schedule. The result was two singles strange even for them. The first was *Dogs*, a love song with a greyhound-racing setting rendered by Daltrey in a cockney accent. *Call Me Lightning* was the A-side in the US, but other territories dropped that track in favour of *Circles*.

Rarest **1968 Polydor £6**

TRACK RECORD
604024
MAGIC BUS
THE WHO

20

MAGIC BUS/ DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

(1968)

The second in the brace of weirdies was a two-year-old relic. Presumably embarrassed by the limitations of a piece of whimsy about a vehicle that takes him to his baby's house set for no good reason to a Bo Diddley beat, Townshend had kept *Magic Bus* in his bottom drawer until now. In Norway, a demo of *Mary Anne With The Shaky Hand* somehow found its way onto the B-side, creating a collector's item.

£ *Rarest* 1968 Polydor **£5**

TOMMY
the who

24

TOMMY

(1969)

Townshend's double-concept album about a deaf, dumb and blind boy who sets up a cult in between pinball games didn't just revitalise The Who's career. By popularising the narrative album, it forever gave rock respectability. Removed from its achievements, it stands or falls on its listenability, and there it tends to suffer in comparison with other Who fare. Although dotted with gems such as *1921* and *Christmas*, few cite *Tommy* as their favourite Who album.

£ *Rarest* 1970 Polydor (South Africa) **£58**

THE WHO LIVE AT LEEDS

22

LIVE AT LEEDS

(1970)

This thunderous in-concert release proved that – even without sight of their mic-twirling, arm-flailing and air-leaping – The Who's live prowess could translate to vinyl. Plus, it helped codify the rules of heavy metal, a genre still in its infancy, with Zeppelin and Sabbath's debuts only recently released. The mock-bootleg design and inserts made for a captivating package. The first 300 copies had black, rather than red or blue, cover lettering.

£ *Rarest* 1970 Polydor (black lettering, inserts) **£250**

THE WHO
Pinball Wizard
Dogs Part Two

25

PINBALL WIZARD/ DOGS PART TWO

(1969)

Tommy's reinvention of The Who as an albums band didn't prohibit the creation of one of The Who's finest singles and a return in the UK to bona-fide hits. It was ironic, because the tale of a master of the coin-operated machine that captivated kids pre-video games was included only to butter up rock journo Nik Cohn. Its opening, incrementally building to furious strumming, is one of the all-time great intros.

£ *Rarest* 1968 International Polydor Production (Australia) **£14**

polydor
2121 001
THE who
THE SEEKER • HERE FOR MORE

23

THE SEEKER/ HERE FOR MORE

(1970)

Entering the 70s, The Who – unlike most of their peers – continued to release standalone 45s. However, they never recaptured their previous status as a singles band. This was despite the fact that the records could be very good. *The Seeker* is a case in point; this story of a tortured soul searching for enlightenment low and h-i-igh (thank you, Roger) is catchy, high-class stuff but only just inched into the Top 20 and is largely forgotten.

£ *Rarest* 1970 Polydor (Norway) **£39**

21

WHO'S NEXT

(1971)

Lifehouse – Townshend's intended follow-up to *Tommy* – was so hellishly complicated, the double concept album was abandoned in favour of a single disc, with all narrative intentions ignored. Yet *Who's Next* is one of the greatest albums ever made. The epic lament for a failed cultural revolution *Won't Get Fooled Again* gets all the kudos, but *Bargain* and the sensual *Love Ain't For Keeping* epitomise The Who's growth into mature artists.

£ *Rarest* 1971 Polydor

the who
Polydor
2058 168

20

LET'S SEE ACTION/ WHEN I WAS A BOY

(1971)

A severely cut-down version of *Won't Get Fooled Again* gave The Who a transatlantic Top 10 hit: the group followed it up with a new standalone single. *Let's See Action* is similar to other Who singles of the time: it's well-crafted, specifically addresses rock's importance to youth and fails to truly excite. Entwistle mordantly explores his hinterland on the other side. Loyal Who fans sent it to No. 16 in the UK.

£ *Rarest* **1971 Polydor (Portugal) £35**

WHO
JOIN TOGETHER
BABY DON'T YOU DO IT
Polydor

19

JOIN TOGETHER BABY DON'T YOU DO IT (LIVE)

(1972)

70s Who and solo Townshend releases were peppered with *Lifehouse* songs that didn't make it onto *Who's Next*. *Join Together* is one such number, and like *Let's See Action* extols the power of music, while failing to convey said power. Jew's harp runs irritatingly through a mediocre track that perplexingly became a UK top-tenner. An in-concert version of a Marvin Gaye number is also thrown in.

£ *Rarest* **1972 Polydor (Italy) £26**

RELAY
waspman
WHO
Polydor

18

RELAY/WASPMAN

(1972)

The defiant A-side was, intriguingly, set to be the opening track of an album entitled *Rock Is Dead – Long Live Rock*. A history of The Who, the remainder of its projected contents was *Get Inside*, *Love Reign O'er Me*, *Women's Liberation*, *Long Live Rock*, *Is It In My Head?*, *Put The Money Down*, *Can't You See I'm Easy* and *Join Together In The Band*. At the last minute, the project was abandoned as self-indulgent and too sonically similar to *Who's Next*.

£ *Rarest* **1972 Polydor (Angola) £400**

17

TOMMY (WITH THE LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA)

(1972)

Whereas 'rock opera' implies something lavish, Kit Lambert's production was rather skeletal. Those who mused about plusher versions of *Tommy* have had their curiosity satisfied by the original soundtrack recording of the Ken Russell movie (1975), the stage-musical cast recording (1993) and this, the first – and grandest – alternate. Only Moon wasn't involved.

£ *Rarest* **1972 Ode (USA, quadraphonic version) £15**

THE WHO
5.15
WATER
Track Record
2094 115

16

5:15/WATER

(1973)

The taster single for the *Quadrophenia* album featured another *Lifehouse* track on the B-side. The A-side never really persuades as the anthem it strives to be; it stalled at No. 20. The beautiful, plaintive *Love, Reign O'er Me* – the second single from the LP – would have been a much better choice. Note: this single should not be confused with a 1979 remix of *5:15* from the soundtrack of the *Quadrophenia* movie, with *I'm One* on the B-side.

£ *Rarest* **1973 Track (Portugal) £65**

QUADROPHENIA
WHO

15

QUADROPHENIA

(1973)

The double album released instead of *Rock Is Dead – Long Live Rock* featured retooled versions of some of the latter's intended tracks. It was also hardly less self-absorbed, being a narrative about a mod whose quadrophonic personality split is based on the four Who members. It's possibly even inferior to the abandoned LP: as with all Who albums from this point onwards, *Quadrophenia* is likeable in its thoughtfulness and admirable in its craft, but only truly impressive in flashes.

£ *Rarest* **2007 Classic (USA, 200 £98)**

ODDS & SODS
THE WHO
ROCK

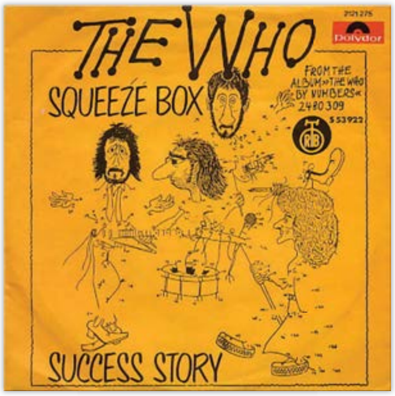
14

ODDS & SODS

(1974)

The Who released just 10 studio albums in their first 17 years. That they could have been much more productive is proven by this 'official bootleg', which rounds up various unreleased tracks, including yet more *Lifehouse* songs, and for good measure throws in the A-side of the High Numbers' single. Its mish-mash nature is signified by the frank title, but the fact that Who discards were superior to most groups' highlights was reflected in its Top 10 chart success.

£ *Rarest* **1974 Track (Greece) £24**



13

SQUEEZE BOX/ SUCCESS STORY

(1975)

The Who By Numbers was a rather sombre album, but its lead-off 45 saw the band sounding like they'd been transported back to the mid 60s, when Townshend was writing twinkle-eyed, slightly bizarre singles. The spirit of *My Ding-A-Ling* informs a ditty about a newly acquired accordion: there's talk of going in and out, getting no sleep at night and every other innuendo Pete could shovel in. It didn't follow Chuck Berry to No. 1, but did make No. 10.

£ *Rarest* **1976 PGP RTB (Yugoslavia) £6**

THE WHO BY NUMBERS
Polydor

12

THE WHO BY NUMBERS

(1975)

A typically soporific, uncertain record of the mid-70s era. Townshend, though, was too meditative to succumb to rock aristo-smugness. The album's songs are suffused with the self-doubt that always made latter-day Who music admirable, even when it wasn't hummable. Meanwhile, the gently life-affirming *Blue, Red And Grey* was a new Who classic. Its unique photo-negative version of Entwistle's cover art makes the Austrian edition highly sought after.

£ *Rarest* **1975 Polydor (Austria) £190**

HAD ENOUGH \ WHO ARE YOU
THE WHO
Double A single 'Had Enough' 'Who are You'
Polydor

11

WHO ARE YOU/ HAD ENOUGH

(1978)

A song born out of a gruelling 11-hour financial negotiation which yielded Townshend a seven-figure settlement, but filled him with disgust. This was surely not uninformed by the punk movement's accusations that his generation were artists second, businessmen first. Coincidentally, he then met two Sex Pistols, whose friendliness worsened his mood. *Who Are You* sees Townshend finally create great art from rich-celeb travails.

£ *Rarest* **1978 Polydor (Belgium) £14**

WHO'S FIRST

The Who's mod ties weren't straightforward

The Who's relationship with mod was ambiguous long before a bemused Pete Townshend informed the parka-clad hordes of mod revivalists at a latter-day Who gig that the band didn't have much in common with them.

It was The Who's first manager, Peter Meaden, who wanted the band to appear to adhere to the fashions and values of the sharp-dressed youth cult of modernism. The band went along with it, although – unlike their mates the Small Faces – they had little affinity with mod and soon gravitated to more ironic, pop-art clothing.

Zoot Suit b/w *I'm The Face* was effectively The Who's debut, even if the 1964 Fontana single was issued under the shortlived name the High Numbers. Meaden's influence is all over the release. It cynically and fatuously pastes mod phraseology and fashion references (many mod 'faces' sported zoot suits) onto the melodies of existing R&B songs: *Misery* by The Dynamics and *I Got Love If You Want It* by Slim Harpo (although some feel *Zoot Suit* owes more to *Country Fool* by The Showmen). The Who seem quite fond of the recordings: they have turned up on many a Who compilation down the years. These days, original editions of a disc that may have only had a pressing of 1,000 fetch close to a grand.

fontana
TF 480
267364 TF
45
MONO
A
ZOOT SUIT
(P. Meaden)
THE HIGH NUMBERS

10

WHO ARE YOU

(1978)

This album sadly failed to live up to the excellence of its namesake single precursor. Punk rock's denunciations of the old guard inform many of these songs, epitomised by *Music Must Change*. Yet the changed music here is an overly elaborate, synth-drenched concoction. The Who had other problems, too. They were drifting apart, hence the three-year gap between albums. And the physically waning Moon's drumming is lacklustre.

£ *Rarest* **1980 Direct-Disk Labs (USA, DBX Encoded) £27**

The Kids Are Alright
THE WHO

9

THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

(1979)

At the turn of the 80s, The Who were a mini motion-picture industry, producing biographical documentary *The Kids Are Alright*, an adaptation of *Quadrophenia* (both 1979) and the crime biopic *McVicar* (1980). *Kids* became an unexpected eulogy for Keith Moon. This double-LP soundtrack offers a good selection of concert, TV and live-in-the-studio material, some of which, like the *Smothers Brothers* and Woodstock appearances, are iconic.

£ *Rarest* **1979 CBS (Japan) £30**

QUADROPHENIA

8

QUADROPHENIA

(1979)

The *Quadrophenia* movie providentially appeared just as the mod revival was sweeping Britain. Its double-LP soundtrack was an odd beast. It contained most, but not all, of the tracks from The Who album that the film dramatised, but remixed by Entwistle. It added three negligible new Who songs, as well as the High Numbers' *Zoot Suit*. There was also a side of 60s songs by other artists, one of which – *Green Onions* – became a UK Top 10 hit through its inclusion.

£ *Rarest* **1987 Polydor (Japan) £36**

WHO'S RAREST

The Who's seldom-glimpsed, much-coveted rarity

In the autumn of 1970, Track Record prepared a budget Who LP entitled *Who Did It!* (catalogue number Track 2856 001). It featured Side One of *A Quick One* backed with Side One of *The Who Sell Out*. These contents were declared to be 'Enhanced for Stereo from original Mono recordings'. Hardly an alluring artefact, one might think. However, the fact that it was quickly withdrawn and subjected instantly to a destruction order made it highly desirable.

Theories vary as to why this particular release was abandoned. Some theorise it was due to Track releases transferring to Polydor (the label's distributor) at around this juncture, pointing out that *Electric Jimi Hendrix* – a similarly scarce abandoned release by a fellow Track artist – had the next sequential catalogue number. Others say The Who were unhappy with the Frankenstein nature of the LP. It's unlikely that the objection was to the Audio Club Of Great Britain, for which Polydor mail-order series it was intended. The club would issue Who (and Hendrix) albums in the future.

400 or so copies of the record had already been distributed before the destruction order went out, so it occasionally materialises. Putting a value on it, though, is problematic, even impossible. It tends to be sold in auctions, with the winning bid kept secret. Suffice to say, any Who fanatic with sufficient funds will dig deep if one appears.

The Who
2002 044
You Better You Bet

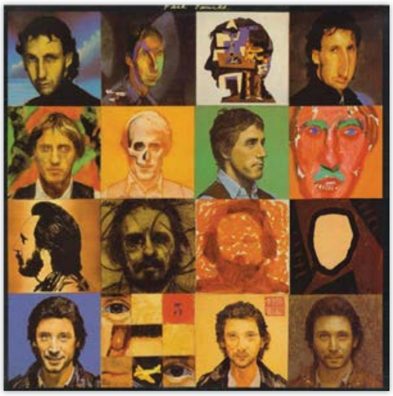
7

YOU BETTER YOU BET/ THE QUIET ONE

(1981)

Keith Moon died of a prescription-drug overdose just weeks after *Who Are You*. The band seemed to go into denial, recruiting ex-Small Faces/Faces drummer Kenney Jones. This single saw the band acquiescing to their first *Top Of The Pops* performance in a decade. The tale of midlife tomcatting on the A-side found Townshend ultimately failing to recapture his past songwriting form. On the likeable B-side, Entwistle belatedly provides himself an anthem.

£ *Rarest* **1981 Polydor (South Africa) £18**



6

FACE DANCES

(1981)

Daily Records summarises Townshend's love for The Who's fans and his determination to never let them down. The objective might have been achieved on this first Jones-era Who album if Pete hadn't withheld his best songs: both Daltrey and Jones thought his recent solo album's rampaging *Rough Boys* should have gone to The Who. There's one semi-classic in *How Can You Do It Alone*, a song in the finest pervy Townshend tradition.

£ *Rarest* **1981 PolyGram TV (Australasia, special edition) £155**

The Who PHASES

5

PHASES

(1981)

In 1980, Virgin somehow managed to negotiate tricky legal waters to reissue the *My Generation* LP, even if there were complaints about the pressing quality. Even better, the following year came this massive German boxset containing *My Generation* and every other Moon-era studio album, plus *Live At Leeds*. There were no complaints about the manufacturing quality of these discs, nor their crisp sound, although there were quibbles about the exclusion of *Odds & Sods*.

£ *Rarest* **1981 Polydor (Germany) £130**

IT'S HARD THE WHO

4

IT'S HARD

(1982)

The Who have acknowledged that this LP was a contractual obligation. Sadly, everything about it suggests the band were justified in their lack of enthusiasm for continuing. The fact of a deep and increasingly troubled man like Townshend using as his mouthpiece an uncomplicated, happy soul like Daltrey was becoming awkward, although admittedly, that wouldn't matter much, were the songs not so lyrically and musically indigestible. Only the funky *Eminence Front* has some life to it.

£ *Rarest* **1982 MCA (Japan) £44**

3

WHO'S LAST

(1984)

It's Hard was promoted with a tour billed as The Who's farewell; this audio document dribbled out two years later. Some editions had a cover featuring a Union Jack (a totemic Who item) symbolically aflame. That Daltrey never thought Jones' drumming worked within The Who was a reason for their split. However, the dismaying quality of The Who's performances on this double LP can't all be put at Jones' feet. The selections are also suspect – why end with *Twist And Shout*?

£ *Rarest* **1984 MCA (Japan) £34**

The Who
JOIN TOGETHER

2

JOIN TOGETHER

(1990)

In 1989, The Who embarked on a 25th Anniversary tour. Not only was it in contravention of their previous 'it's over' pledges, but the jaunt – with Simon Phillips replacing Jones on drums – found Townshend, beset by tinnitus problems, often restricted to playing rhythm guitar inside a Perspex booth. This triple-LP document of the tour was predictably depressing.

£ *Rarest* **1990 Virgin £21**

THE WHO
ENDLESS WIRE

1

ENDLESS WIRE

(2006)

The Who resumed touring in 1996 and have continued sporadic live work since. Entwistle's death in 2002 torpedoed mooted Who recordings, but – after new tracks on the 2004 CD-only compilation *Then And Now* – an album arrived in 2006. It was surprisingly ambitious, with half devoted to a mini-opera. Even without Moon and Entwistle, and with Daltrey's voice in decline, the contents hold their own with at least latter-day Who albums. ●

£ *Rarest* **2015 Polydor (180g) £14**

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Classic Album

HOUNDS OF LOVE

KATE BUSH

Mystery surrounded Kate Bush in 1985, with rumours circulating that she'd given up music for good. Far from it – she was readying the sublime *Hounds Of Love*. As Bush celebrates her 60th birthday, **Mark Lindores** runs the rule over her career masterpiece

Kate Bush
Hounds Of Love

Getty

Given her status as one of the most original and dynamic artists Britain has ever produced, it's hard to imagine that in the mid 80s, Kate Bush was perceived to be languishing in the pop wasteland.

In July 1985, as the world basked in the enormity of Live Aid, *NME* – no doubt dismayed at the state of a British music scene dominated by Dire Straits, Queen and Phil Collins – ran an article asking where Bush had disappeared to. It had been three years since her last album, *The Dreaming*, and there were rumours that she'd gone mad, developed an addiction to junk food that had seen her weight balloon to 20 stone, or retired from the music industry completely. In fact, nothing could've been further from the truth and, in September of that year, she unleashed what would become her defining opus, *Hounds Of Love*, on the world.

The ethereal ingénue who'd transfixed the nation with the almost-operatic *Wuthering Heights* at the height of punk and disco in 1978 had previously been prolific, releasing four albums in five years, as well as completing an extensive European tour – 1979's The Tour Of Life. However, as her work had grown ever more experimental, so her commercial success had dwindled. While *The Dreaming* had been truly ahead of its time, using new technology such as the Fairlight synth, it had produced only one UK Top 20 single (*Sat In Your Lap*) and alienated even Bush's most fervent admirers.

Since then, all that had been heard from the singer was a bulletin in her fan club newsletter in 1983: "This year has been very positive so far. It doesn't have the same air of doom and gloom that '81 and '82 seemed to hold. The problem is that if I don't make an album this year, there will be at least another two-year gap, and the way business and politics are, it would be a negative situation. I seem to have hit another quiet period. I intend to keep on writing for the first part of the year, so yet again, I slip away from the eyeball of the media to my home."

'Home' at this point was a 17th-century farmhouse in Kent, and it was here that Bush built a state-of-the-art, 48-track recording studio. This enabled her creativity to run free without the burden of studio costs, which had been a bone of contention with her label, EMI, during the sessions for *The Dreaming*. Bush had also been dissatisfied at the frequency with which she'd been expected to produce new material, and felt that some of her releases could've been better with the benefit of time (especially her second album, *Lionheart*). Working on her fifth album at home enabled Bush the freedom to write, produce, arrange and perform on her own terms (practically unheard of at the time, particularly for a female

> ***"Moving the studio into my home helped in so many ways. I felt free to work in an uninhibited way"***
> KATE BUSH

Above: Kate. Bush. Circa 1985

artist). "Moving the studio into my home couldn't have been a better decision," she said in 1985. "It helped in so many ways. I felt much more relaxed and free to work in an uninhibited way. If you're paying for studio time, you feel guilty if you experiment; that you're throwing money away. Whereas at home, there's none of that pressure."

TWIN THEMES

Having used her time out of the spotlight to reconnect with friends and immerse herself in film and literature, a revitalised Bush found herself at her most inspired, revelling in the creative freedom that she'd longed and fought for. A sojourn to Dublin proved to be equally inspiring – both thematically and sonically. Bush began fusing the Fairlight with the folky instruments she'd used in Ireland, crafting the sound that would inform the album.

It was also while in Dublin that Bush penned most of the lyrics and began to realise a concept for the record – namely, weather patterns and water. She separated the album into two halves – the first being *Hounds Of Love* and the second *The Ninth Wave*, a suite of seven songs that would take up all of Side Two of the record, and document the ebbing consciousness of a drowning woman in terrifying detail.

The public's first taste of the album came in August 1985 when Bush appeared on *Wogan* to premiere *Running Up That Hill*, the lead single. With a multi-layered vocal over a sparse, tribal drum pattern and synths, it was akin to Bush's previous songs in that it completely set itself apart from everything else around at the time, and her innovative use of technology saw her lauded as a pioneer within the field.

Below: Kate Bush in 1978 at her family's home in East Wickham, London, where she recorded *Hounds Of Love*

Getty

The songs

Core personnel

Kate Bush Vocals, Fairlight CMI, piano
Alan Murphy Guitar
Del Palmer Bass, backing vocals, Linn programming
Paddy Bush Violin, balalaika, didgeridoo, fujara
Stuart Elliott Drums
Charlie Morgan Drums

Production

Del Palmer, Haydn Bendall, Brian Tench, Paul Hardiman, Nigel Walker, James Guthrie, Bill Somerville-Large, Pearce Dunne, Julian Mendelsohn, Chris Blair, Ian Cooper

Recorded 1984 to 1985, Wickham Farm Home Studio, Welling
Mastered Townhouse Studios, London
Released 16 September, 1985 (UK)

1 RUNNING UP THAT HILL (A DEAL WITH GOD)

Hounds Of Love's first single and the first track written for the LP, *Running Up That Hill* is about a couple seeing their relationship from the opposite perspective. "I was trying to say that a man and a woman can't understand each other because we're a man and a woman," explained Bush.

2 HOUNDS OF LOVE

"*Hounds Of Love* was inspired by this old black-and-white movie called *Night Of The Demon*," revealed Bush. "It's about this demon that appears in the trees. And the line: 'It's in the trees, it's coming' is taken from the film. I liked the imagery of being hunted by love; the idea of being chased by this love that, when it gets you, is going to rip you to pieces and have your guts all over the floor!".

3 THE BIG SKY

The fourth and final single from the album, *The Big Sky* is about the carefree activities of childhood. Said Bush: "At the time I was writing this album, we were living in the country and my keyboards were in a room overlooking a valley. I'd sit and watch the clouds rolling up the hill towards me."

4 MOTHER STANDS FOR COMFORT

Mother Stands For Comfort is about the relationship between a mother and her son, who happens to be a murderer. "The personality that sings the track is unfeeling in a way, so the cold qualities of synths and machines were appropriate," said Bush. "There are many different kinds of love and the track is talking about the love of a mother. She's prepared to protect her son against anything. In a way, it's also suggesting that the son is using the mother as much as the mother is protecting him."

5 CLOUDBUSTING

"*Cloudbusting* was inspired by *A Book Of Dreams*, which is this beautiful story by Peter Reich," Bush enthused. "His father was Wilhelm Reich, a respected psychoanalyst, and Peter used to go cloudbusting with him. His father had this machine that, when he pointed it up to the sky, could make the clouds disperse."

▶

Rex

But it wasn't just the aural landscape of the track that captivated her fanbase all over again; it was also the lyrical meaning – about the fundamental differences between the sexes and how they lead to misunderstanding in relationships. "The song was originally called *A Deal With God*," said Bush. "But we were told that if we kept this title, it wouldn't be played in any of the religious countries – Italy wouldn't play it, France wouldn't play it, Ireland wouldn't play it – that we might get it blacklisted because it had 'God' in the title.

"Now, I couldn't believe this; it seemed completely ridiculous to me and the title was such a part of the song's identity. I couldn't understand it. But although I was unhappy about it, I felt that if I didn't compromise, I'd be cutting my own throat. I'd just spent two or three years making an album and, if I was stubborn, we weren't going to get this record played on the radio. So I had to be grown-up about it and we changed the title to *Running Up That Hill*. But it's something I've always regretted doing. I always regret any compromises that I make." [Bush still got her own way with the title of the album version, though, calling the track *Running Up That Hill (A Deal With God)*].

> ***"We changed the title to Running Up That Hill. But it's something I've always regretted doing"***
>
> KATE BUSH

CHARTBUSTING

The song became Bush's biggest hit since *Wuthering Heights* seven years earlier, reaching No. 3 in the UK and also opening up the prospect of commercial viability in the US, a market she'd previously failed to penetrate (additionally, a remixed version of the track reached No. 6 in the UK after its inclusion in the closing ceremony of the 2012 Summer Olympics). Its success was the perfect launchpad for Bush's fifth album, which followed on 16 September 1985.

The record was released to unanimous praise, with critics hailing its merging of the technological with the traditional, encompassing sounds and influences that would accentuate every nuance of the sublime songwriting at the heart of the album, but never overshadow it. Unlike *The Dreaming*, *Hounds Of Love* struck a perfect balance between fulfilling both the artist and her fanbase, giving Bush her second UK No. 1 album. It spent June and July of 1985 embroiled in a tug-of-war with Madonna's *Like A Virgin* for the top spot, and remained in the charts for over a year, making it Bush's best-selling album to date.

Kate Bush and her then-partner Del Palmer looking at the big sky at the London Planetarium

WATCHING YOU WITHOUT ME

Although Side One of the album (*Hounds Of Love*) comprised some remarkable, cutting-edge, intelligent pop songs (and kept EMI satisfied by producing a string of hit singles in *Cloudbusting*, the title track and *The Big Sky*), it was Side Two (*The Ninth Wave*) that marked Bush out as someone truly at the pinnacle of their creativity.

The album was awash with references to the cinema, art and literature that had inspired it – the title track was contrived from the 1957 horror movie *Night Of The Demon*; *Cloudbusting* was based on *A Book Of Dreams*, Peter Reich's novel about his inventor father; while the conceptual opus *The Ninth Wave* was named after Tennyson's poem *Idylls Of The King* and based on a surrealist painting called *The Hogsmith Ophelia*, which depicts a doll drowning in the sea. Given the graphic description and visual nature of the music, it was widely expected Bush would embark on her first tour in six years to promote the album.

Her Tour Of Life in 1979 had been a critical and commercial success, comprising elements of music, fashion, art and dance, but Bush had found it physically exhausting and chose not to repeat the process (a phobia of flying and the trauma brought about by the death of Bill Duffield, a lighting director working on the show, were rumoured to have contributed to her decision). Instead, excited by the advent of music videos, she decided that would be the perfect medium to present visual representations of the songs. "I loved working with video because I originally envisioned some of the songs as short films," she said.

Three decades after *Hounds Of Love*'s release, Kate Bush (CBE) is regarded as pop royalty. Her 22-date residency at Hammersmith Apollo in 2014 was a reverential experience, selling out 78,000 tickets in a matter of minutes. *Hounds Of Love* is still regarded as a masterpiece, regularly earning a spot on 'Best Albums' lists. Its influence is also evident in the work of artists such as Björk, Tori Amos, Bat For Lashes, Goldfrapp and others. As for Bush herself, she remains fiercely proud of *Hounds Of Love* and has only good memories of making it.

"At the time, it was such a lot of work," she conceded. "The lyrics and trying to piece the whole thing together. But I did love it, and everyone who worked on the album was wonderful. In some ways, it was the happiest I've ever been when writing and making an album. I know there's a theory that goes around that you must suffer for your art – you know, all that stuff about, 'it's not real art unless you suffer'. But I don't believe this at all, because I think, in some ways, this was the most complete work that I've done; in some ways, it's the best and I was the happiest that I'd been, compared to making other albums." ●

Alamy

The songs *continued*

6 *AND DREAM OF SHEEP*

This lullaby begins *The Ninth Wave*, the concept album that forms Side Two of *Hounds Of Love*. "It's the idea of this person being alone in the water, at the mercy of their imagination. I find that horrific," Bush told the BBC in 1992.

7 *UNDER ICE*

"At this point, although she doesn't want to go to sleep, of course she does," continued Bush. "This is a dream and it's meant to be nightmarish. It's terribly lonely; she's all alone on this frozen lake. And at the end of it, it's the idea of seeing herself under the ice."

8 *WAKING THE WITCH*

"In this song, this woman is being persecuted by a witch-hunter and the whole jury – although she's committed no crime – and they're trying to push her under the water to see if she'll sink or float," explained Bush.

9 *WATCHING YOU WITHOUT ME*

"Now, this person has been in the water for hours and been witch-hunted and everything," said Bush. "Suddenly, she's kind of at home, in spirit, seeing her loved one sitting there, waiting for her to come home… But there's no way she can actually communicate, because he can't see her. I find this really horrific – these are my worst nightmares put into song."

10 *JIG OF LIFE*

Jig Of Life was recorded with a host of Irish session musicians to capture the feel for the song. "At this point in the story, it's the future self of this person coming to visit her, to give her a bit of help," explained Bush.

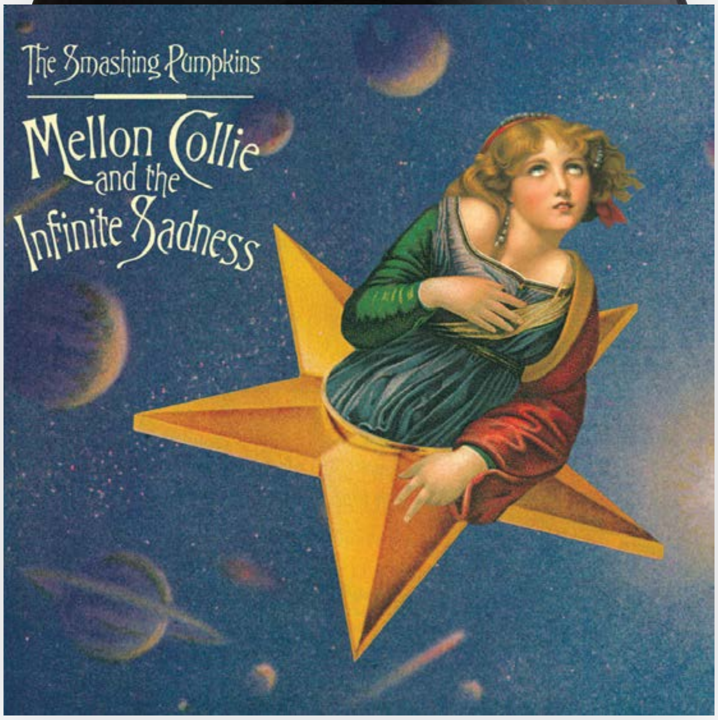
11 *HELLO EARTH*

"*Hello Earth* is a lullaby for the Earth. It's the idea of this person turning the whole thing upside down and looking at it from above. And she's seeing these storms forming over America and moving around the globe; she has this huge, fantastic overseeing view of everything."

12 *THE MORNING FOG*

"Although it doesn't say so, in my mind this is the song where she gets rescued, where she gets pulled out of the water. The weightiness is gone and here's the morning, and it's meant to feel very positive and bright and uplifting after the dense darkness of the previous track."

Choice Cuts #15


The Smashing Pumpkins
Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness

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On their epic third album, the Pumpkins evolved their thunderous guitar riffs and psychedelic leanings into a highly ambitious and desirable package

WAX FACTS
The Smashing Pumpkins
Melon Collie And The Infinite Sadness
Year **1995**
Format **Black vinyl**
£ £300

In 1995, The Smashing Pumpkins had the unenviable task of following their iconic second album, *Siamese Dream*. It had sent them hurtling into the mainstream, and the Chicago band spent a five-month period writing their 28-track opus, *Mellon Collie And The Infinite Sadness*.

The album was built around dream-like imagery and, as Pumpkins mastermind Billy Corgan once said: "The human condition of mortal sorrow". There were epic moments of grandeur, such as *Tonight, Tonight* and *1979*, with nods towards their grunge-infused roots on *Bullet With Butterfly Wings* and *Zero*. Even the more experimental moments, *We Only Come Out At Night* and *Galapogos*, fit the overall exploratory nature of the album.

Given how vast *Mellon Collie*... was, spanning nearly 90 minutes, the vinyl release was spread across 3LPs. It gives the stunning, celestial artwork of John Craig, a big part of the entire album experience, the platform it deserves. Each copy in the run of 20,000 was individually numbered, which may seem a lot on paper, but so few people want to let go of this masterpiece, it's still highly sought after. There's also an unknown quantity of un-numbered copies out in the wild.

Mellon Collie... has since been reissued and remastered as a 4LP boxset, which is an excellent release, but nothing quite compares to owning an original. A mint-condition copy will set you back close to £300 on the collectors' market, but it's worth every penny. ***Glen Bushell***

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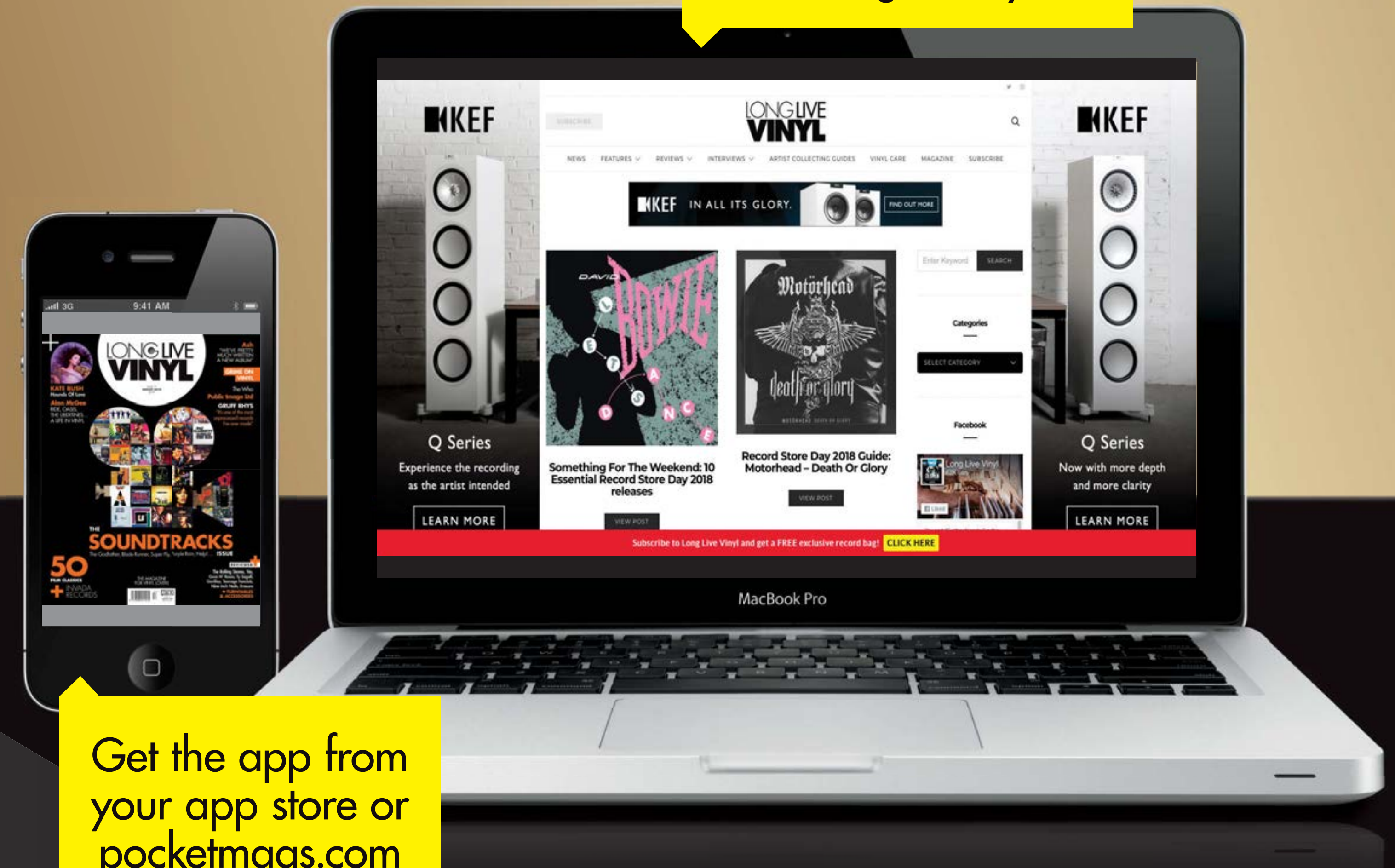
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COVER STAR

HYPERGALLERY

They worked with the legendary cover artist Storm Thorgerson, and their limited-edition album-art prints have become highly desirable collector's items. **Teri Saccone** meets the father-and-daughter team behind Hypergallery…

With a passion for quality and design flair, Hypergallery have become leading purveyors of limited-edition album art. Yet owners Rob Smeaton and daughter Emily don't just sell covetable prints, they also retain an emphasis on the compelling stories behind them.

"We do a limited-edition run of fine-art prints with high-quality inks not susceptible to UV light," says Rob. "That run can span from 25-500 copies, depending on what we think the market will bear. Most of what we do is digital, as it's got so sophisticated and perfect."

Lifelong vinyl fan Rob places the emphasis on the quality of their prints: "This marketplace we're in is music-related ephemera. But we're not just about nostalgia. Yes, that's part of it, but we're about art."

"We think it's art that deserves to be celebrated," adds Emily. Hypergallery now extends to more than 200 images. "These are not quick sales," continues Rob. "They are quite beautiful, and we often get people returning to us to buy others."

TAKEN BY STORM

The idea for the business was derived through an association with legendary art director and Hipgnosis co-founder Storm Thorgerson.

"Working with Storm began in 2000 and that was the defining moment for Hypergallery," Rob explains. "Obviously, his output was so prolific from the 70s onwards and he's considered a true genius. He believed that this is art that people should be able to buy, aside from the album covers. So he came up with 12 images of Pink Floyd covers that he wanted made into limited-edition prints.

"Over the next 13 years, until his death in 2013, we had many encounters with the enigmatic and unpredictable Storm. He could be uncommonly rude at times, whilst sometimes, he was disarmingly kind and caring, a unique, fantastic character. There's a huge catalogue of what he left behind.

"We met Hipgnosis photographer Aubrey Powell not long after Storm, and our relationship continues to this day. We have published with him a nine-image set of some of the classic, non-Pink Floyd, Hipgnosis album covers. He has been a great supporter of Hypergallery, and we'll work with him again later this year, for a Hipgnosis exhibition in Berlin."

This was not Rob's first meeting with the Hipgnosis mastermind. "When I finished art college in 1972 and came to London for a job, the Jobcentre sent me to an interview with Hipgnosis. I'd not yet heard of them, as they had just launched. I went for the interview in a shabby studio on Denmark Street. They wanted an assistant. At the end of the interview, my final question was the pay. It was a derisory figure of about £20 per week. I told them that was less than I was getting from Social Security. They told me to 'fuck off'. I'm not sure which of them said that, but 30 years later, I told Storm that story. He didn't remember it," Rob recounts, laughing.

COMPLEX METHODS

Some of the Hypergallery projects have had inherent challenges, which they've worked through cleverly. One example is De La Soul's *3 Feet High And Rising*.

"The combination of the photo of their three heads and the hand-drawn graphics, we thought were just unique," explains Rob. "We tracked down the artist, Toby Mott, who happened to live not too far away from us. He had been working in New York at the time of the album's production, but settled in London and had become well known for his work as a punk archivist/historian.

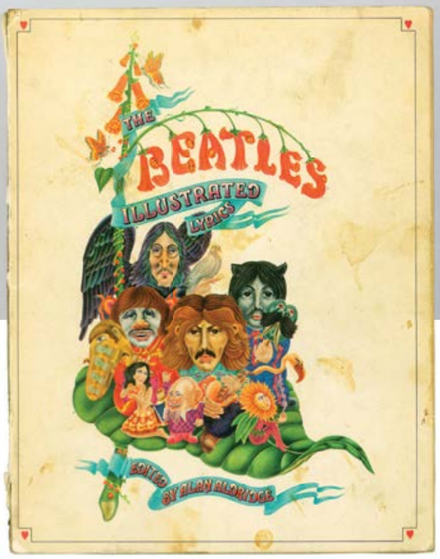
"This was an unusual process, because we combined the Giclée printing technique to reproduce the photographs, and then a hand-pulled silkscreen methodology to reproduce the fluorescent colours that Toby

Hypergallery's Emily Smeaton

Storm Thorgerson signing a print of Peter Gabriel's 'Car' album cover art

"WE DO LIMITED-EDITION FINE-ART PRINTS WITH HIGH-QUALITY INKS NOT SUSCEPTIBLE TO UV LIGHT"

Father-and-daughter team Rob and Emily Smeaton



had originally achieved with marker pens. This was a labour of love and the result is one that we're very proud of."

LEGEND OF PSYCHEDELIA

The team at Hypergallery were particularly touched by the death last year of Alan Aldridge, the psychedelic artist perhaps best known for his work on *The Beatles Illustrated Lyrics* book, pictured above.

"We were so sad to hear of Alan's death," says Rob. "In 1969, I was at art college, and my musical heroes were The Beatles and Dylan. I also had art heroes, particularly Peter Blake and Alan. His book, *The Beatles Illustrated Lyrics*, was published in 1969; my girlfriend at the time bought a copy for me.

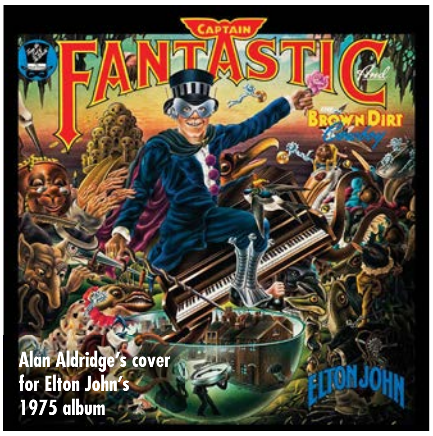
"Dog-eared and falling apart, my copy was still my prized possession when, at the beginning of this century, I got to meet my hero. I was at the stuttering start of my journey into the print-publishing business, and Alan was living in London. I reached out and we had a very enjoyable and slightly drunken meal together. I asked him to sign my book. He kindly complied and wrote in it, too – an embellishment of the title page that I will always treasure.

"Afterwards, I agreed to publish four of his most famous illustrations. They were fabulous, and all featured in *The Beatles Illustrated Lyrics*; many years later, I finally got to publish his work. By then, Hypergallery was well established and our focus was very specifically on album covers. It struck me that his celebrated album art was still unpublished as limited editions.

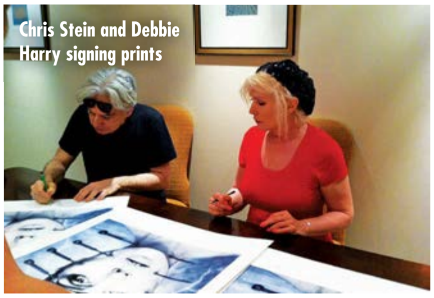
"Alan was living in Los Angeles by then and, after many conversations, we were set to publish editions of his Elton John's *Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy*, and The Who's *A Quick One* covers. They were to be printed on demand in LA, but when fate intervened, and Alan so sadly died, only a small percentage of each edition had ever been printed. We are left with a small number of prints, a cherished last consignment signed with a flourish by a talented and charismatic man. Alan Aldridge rocked."

Another talent Rob enjoyed working with is Peter Gabriel, whose priorities extended from his music to visuals. "Over the course of two years, I reached out to Peter's management

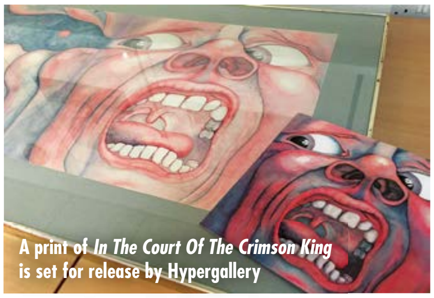
A Hypergallery exhibition at the Oxo Gallery in 2010



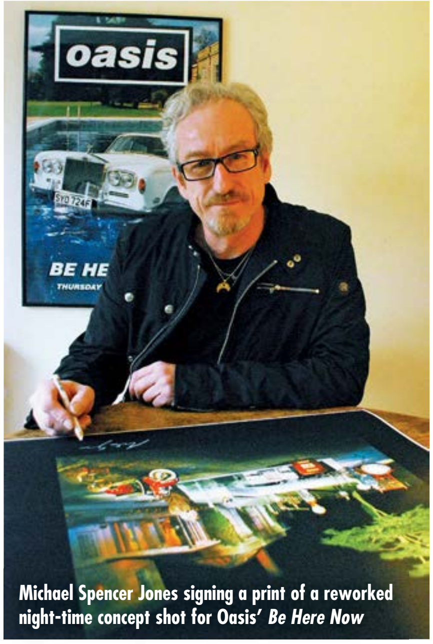
Alan Aldridge's cover for Elton John's 1975 album



Chris Stein and Debbie Harry signing prints



A print of *In The Court Of The Crimson King* is set for release by Hypergallery



Michael Spencer Jones signing a print of a reworked night-time concept shot for Oasis' *Be Here Now*

and kept badgering them until they gave in to me. They hired a consultant, Andy Wood, to work with me to reproduce all of Peter's sleeves. It was a great experience and we discovered Peter is a big supporter of art. His album sleeves had been done by Hipgnosis and Robert Mapplethorpe, Julian Grater, Nils-Udo, and Susan Derges, who specialises in camera-less photographic images. Peter's personal involvement in the art that adorned his album covers meant that the artists were all people he had taken an interest in and whose work he had admired. "We did 15 different limited editions, all countersigned by him, which is quite unusual for a musician."

Another generous musician who made a lasting impression on Rob was Debbie Harry. "Blondie were to be on tour soon after the publication of her solo-album print, and so we tentatively approached Blondie's management about Debbie countersigning the prints when she was in London. Happily, with the help of the friendly Chris Stein, we met up at the Landmark Hotel in London and they signed a number of the prints. They were keen to do something in support of HR Giger, who they revered and felt had not received the level of international acclaim that he deserved.

"Soon after, we heard that HR Giger had passed away, so the full edition was never produced, but we are left with a cherished and valuable collection."

THE ELUSIVE ONE

"Some covers are ubiquitously popular, instantly recognisable," says Rob. "Who wouldn't instantly recognise *The Dark Side Of The Moon* or *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*?

"A landmark image that has remained elusive is *In The Court Of The Crimson King*, the debut from King Crimson, which was cropped from a painting by artist Barry Godber. He died soon after the album was released, so never knew the impact his work would have. We have been tenacious in pursuing this project and, after many conversations and meetings, its publication is finally on the horizon.

"The original painting is owned by Robert Fripp, and we were privileged to have it in our possession for a few days. We made a high-resolution digital image and reframed the painting to museum standards, as it had suffered a little over the years. We are confident now that the limited edition will be published this year and are very excited that we will add this to our portfolio."

Another project Hypergallery are wildly enthusiastic about has a decidedly 90s vibe. "Our most recent collaboration is with Michael Spencer Jones; a stunning photograph of The Verve outside The Lyric in Times Square for the *History* single, and a previously unseen night shot, which was the original concept for Oasis' *Be Here Now* cover.

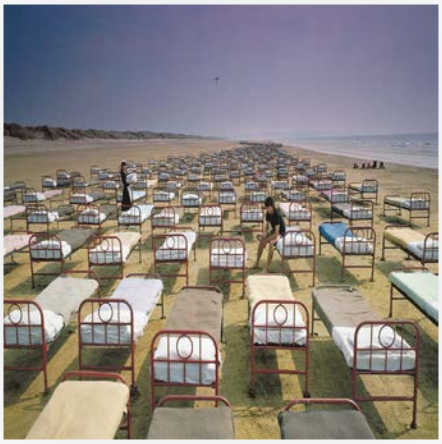
"Michael has gone back to the original negatives and reworked the image using modern technology that wasn't really available in 1997, when the negatives came out massively underexposed. It was because one of the main lighting generators blew up just as they began, and by then, most of the band and lighting crew were allegedly paralytic and it all turned to chaos. They had to change the cover concept to a daytime shot, so it's really special for me to be able to offer this artist the chance to get his original idea out there, as such a nice, big piece of work."

It may be no surprise to learn that Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side Of The Moon* is Hypergallery's biggest seller "over a long period", explains Emily. "Our fastest seller is Robert Wyatt's *Rock Bottom*, with nearly half the edition of 100 selling within the first month or two. 90% of the edition had sold within the first couple of years." ▶

"A LANDMARK IMAGE THAT HAS REMAINED ELUSIVE IS *IN THE COURT OF THE CRIMSON KING*, CROPPED FROM A PAINTING BY BARRY GODBER"

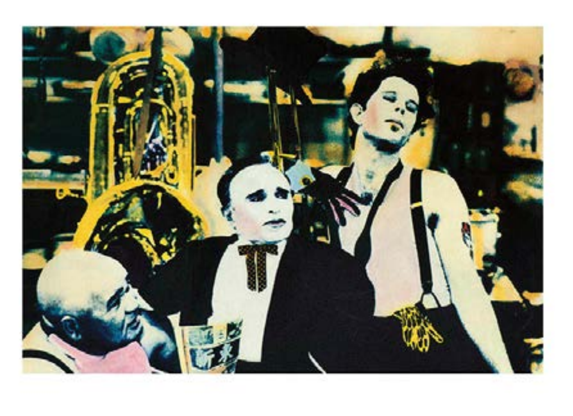
CLASSIC COVERS

HYPERGALLERY



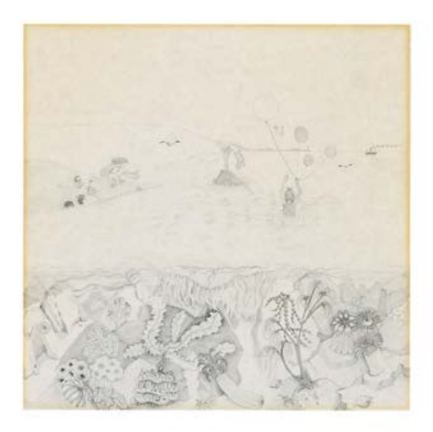
PINK FLOYD
A MOMENTARY LAPSE OF REASON

"What Storm did by transporting 300 beds to be filmed over three days on an English beach was actually like performance art. He never took shortcuts," says Rob.



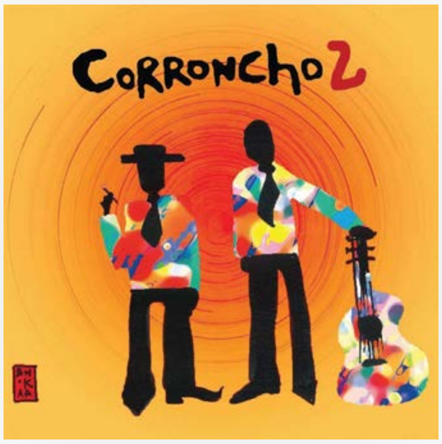
TOM WAITS
SWORDFISHTROMBONES

"Last year, we got a phone call from John Colton, a Northern Irish gallerist based in Berlin. A photographer, Michael A Russ, who he represented, had been the man behind the imagery and video for Tom Waits' *Swordfishtrombones* album. John had been looking for a home for a limited-edition run of the album cover and we had popped up in his internet searching. We are now proud to have this fabulous print exclusively on our site, and we had a great few days to boot, meeting John and his team in Berlin."



ROBERT WYATT
ROCK BOTTOM

"In 2015, we were contacted by Mark Ellingham, the man who conceived the *Rough Guide* series of books back in 1982. He was publishing a biography of the musician Robert Wyatt, whose album covers had been painted by Robert's wife, Alfreda Benge. Mark thought it would be great if some of these covers could be published as prints to be released in parallel with the book, and he asked us if we would be interested… These prints are beautiful and have been among our best-selling publications, thanks to Mark's involvement and the couple's loyal fanbase."

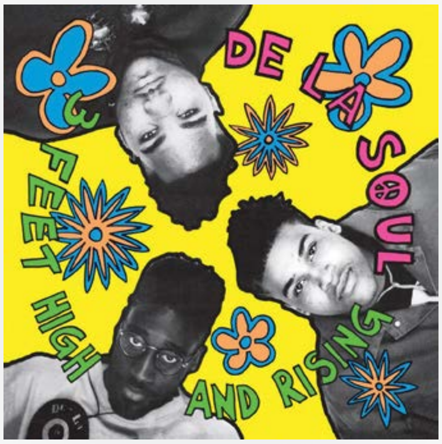


PHIL MANZANERA
CORRONCHO 2

"Phil really liked what we were doing and asked if we'd ever thought about Roxy Music covers," says Emily. "Of course, I said 'Yes', and ever since, we've been been talking to Phil about the idea. Nothing has come of it so far, but these things do take a long time! Meanwhile, we've published a set of 14 pictures that adorned the packaging of Phil's album *Corroncho 2*. Each of these pictures, by Brazilian artist Bwokaa, illustrates a track from the album and they're quite unlike anything we've done before."

CLASSIC COVERS

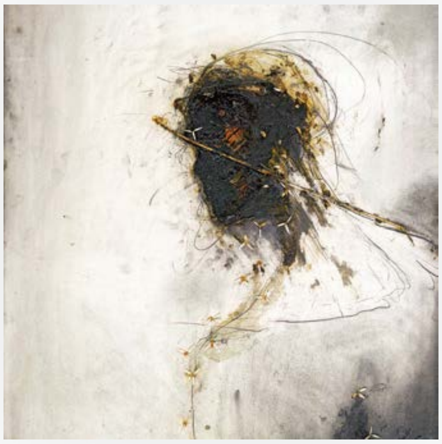
HYPERGALLERY



DE LA SOUL

3 FEET HIGH AND RISING

“Toby (the designer) was very keen on the idea of doing the print, and we worked closely with him to make sure we kept the spirit of the original design. This was an unusual process for us to reproduce. It was a labour of love, and Toby was pleased with the results.”



PETER GABRIEL

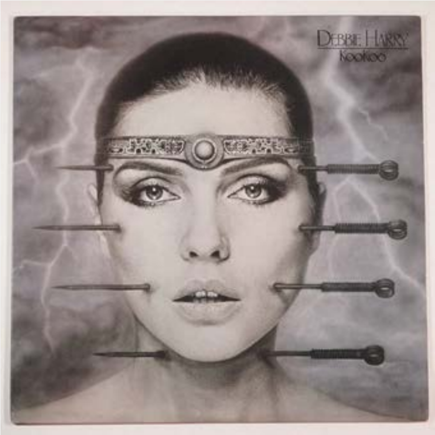
PASSION

“Emily had a painting studio in an artist collective in Reading, where she met artist Julian Grater. Amongst the pictures in his studio was a reproduction of Peter Gabriel’s *Passion* cover, which Julian explained was his work. Through him, we introduced ourselves to Peter Gabriel’s organisation Real World to ask if we could publish that picture as a limited-edition print. This was a catalyst that led us to working with Real World on a collection of 15 Peter Gabriel images.”

OASIS

DEFINITELY MAYBE

“Michael Spencer Jones is the photographer responsible for the first three Oasis album covers. Over the years, we’ve worked on various projects with him. Everything he does is impeccable, as he’s a total perfectionist. 2019 will mark 25 years since *Definitely Maybe,* and with strong new albums from both Gallagher brothers, it feels like the right time to celebrate what they achieved with some of Michael’s fantastic images.”



DEBBIE HARRY

KOOKOO

“I’ve been a long-time fan of HR Giger, who created the title creature in Ridley Scott’s film *Alien,*” says Rob. “He was a master of the airbrush, a tool that pre-dated computer graphics in the creation of photorealistic illustration. We approached Giger about the cover he had done for Debbie Harry’s solo album *KooKoo*. After much negotiation, we were able to publish an edition of the image. Then, thanks to Chris Stein, get Debbie to sign the prints.” ●

DIGGING FOR VICTORY

At what point should a digger give up on a seemingly unpromising collection? **Mark O'Shaughnessy** says: "Never!", and proceeds to tell us why

In previous columns, I've talked about how surprised I've been down the years to find a hidden gem in a load of absolutely valueless tat. This used to happen to me in the States a lot – Bananas in St. Petersburg, FL immediately springs to mind, but that's another story…

These days, I travel abroad less, because there's no need to go too far to dig up the black gold anymore – there are probably more (rare) records in the UK per capita than any other country, but I still sometimes almost fall over with amazement at what comes my way when I'm looking through people's collections. This still happens now I'm living in the fair city of Bath.

It was 2008; I'd been living in Bath for about three months and was still finding my feet. I'd worked out the local digging spots (very few and far between) and decided to keep away from Bristol – waaaay too many other excavators over there already. So, I reverted to my tried-and-tested ads in shop windows/local papers system to try to dredge up some stock – it'd worked well enough for me in London, so why not here? I placed ads everywhere and took out a sub in *The Bath Chronicle* and waited… and waited.

A quick word about the vinyl world at this point. Record sales were still very much in the doldrums – the current 'vinyl revival' was yet to happen and most people still had zero interest in buying or selling records. One freezing December morning, I got a call from a man who was only two minutes from where I then lived. Nowadays, I ask people who want to sell to me to either send pictures of what they have for sale, or to pick out a random handful and read them over the phone – too many wasted journeys down the years have taught me this harsh life lesson.

But I was struggling to get my hands on any stock at all, so I just went along and remained hopeful there would be a few decent items. It was well-below-zero and still frosty, and I should've asked where the records were stored… which was in a shed at the end of a 200-foot garden. Thank God I'd brought my fingerless gloves.

There must have been 6,000 to 7,000 7"s, in 40 to 50 supermarket home-delivery plastic boxes. The owner came back with a cup of tea and I asked how long they'd been in storage – "Since the late 70s," he said. He told me he used to be a mobile DJ, and my heart sank. I'd been through many of these kind of guys' ex-collections down the years, and 99.99% of them were total rubbish – chart hits of the day, novelty records, just pap.

There was an average of one to two per cent, absolute max, in each box worth taking out. My fingers were red-raw and I was losing my sense of humour rapidly when I spotted a Liberty 7" light-blue/dark-blue custom sleeve. Custom-sleeve geeks will know Liberty Records used this design in the UK between about 1967 and 1970 – it's a classic. I took it out into the raw December light to take a closer look… Oh my God! I was holding one of *the* rarest UK Northern Soul 7"s ever, a clean copy of Timi Yuro's *It'll Never Be Over For Me*, unplayed, non-dinked, clean labels, no timing notes, no mildew – in NM/M condition (old records *never* get the M/Mint grade from me).

> ***I was holding one of the rarest UK Northern Soul 7"s ever: Timi Yuro's It'll Never Be Over For Me – unplayed, non-dinked, clean labels, no mildew***

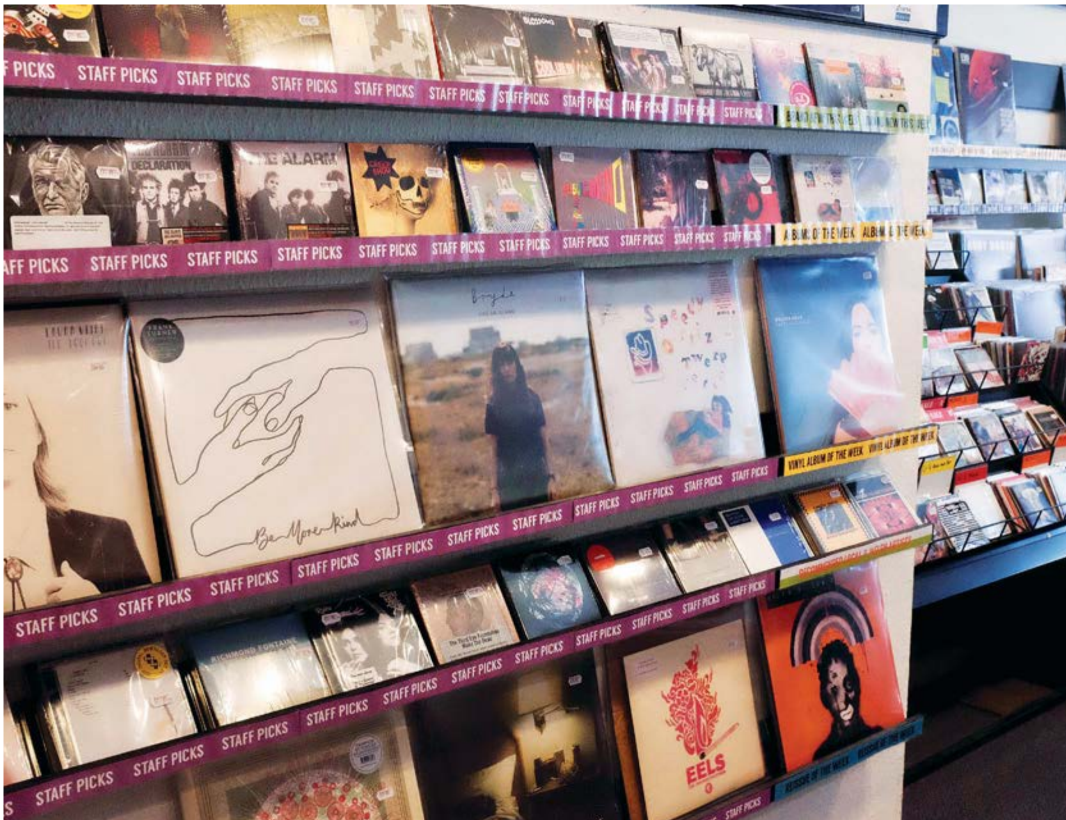
Even 10 years ago, this 7" was worth close to £1,000 – nowhere near as rare as Darrell Banks on UK London, but definitely in the same ballpark. I'd never seen one before, and I'd handled many hefty Northern Soul collections. Christ knows what this guy was doing with it! There is an EX copy sitting on Discogs right now at £1,850 – it really was a once-in-a-lifetime find.

As soon as my hands had stopped shaking, I asked the owner where he got it. He told me he was on several record-label mailing lists back in the 60s and 70s, and used to get sent stuff all the time. I made him what I thought was a fair offer for the 7" (which he accepted in an instant!) and went back to the shed to go through the rest of the boxes. Guess what? Not one more decent item popped up, so I believe I was destined to find that 7". The proceeds from the sale of that one record alone allowed me to finance a trip to NYC. The moral of the story? Never give up – you just never know what you might find. ●

Mark O'Shaughnessy is the owner of Bath record shop Resolution Records and has been a professional record dealer since 1993

ROCK & POP
DEAD MEADOW
DEPECHE MODE
CAPTAIN BEEFHEART
ELVIS COSTELLO
NICK CAVE
BOB DYLAN
EELS
FOO FIGHTERS

diverse music


STAFF PICKS

DIVERSE MUSIC

NEWPORT, WALES

Diverse – a shop, a label and a mail-order business – proves Wales has plenty of room for more than one famous record-shop institution. **Garth Cartwright** heads to the 'port to find out how a small indie record store became a go-to vinyl destination

South Wales may be home to the world's oldest record shop – Spillers of Cardiff – but Diverse Music in nearby Newport is also a truly legendary vinyl emporium. Initially opening in 1988, Diverse has gone through changes of ownership and location over its three-decade existence. Throughout, the retailer has maintained its position as not just a unique independent record shop, but also a vinyl hotspot. Co-owners Matt Jarrett and Paul Hawkins tell the story of a visionary independent record shop.

"Diverse was opened by John Richards," says Jarrett. "Mark Southall was his trusty staff member from other shops he ran, and came with him. Paul Hawkins worked there as a Saturday boy, before leaving to live in Brighton. Kevin Donovan also worked there. I came along later on. After a decade of running Diverse, John decided he was too old to run a record shop and started a vinyl-only label… He then entrusted the shop to Mark, Kevin and a returning Paul."

BOTH SIDES OF THE COUNTER

"I wasn't involved in 1988 when the shop opened," says Hawkins. "I was 15, and still in school. But I did buy an album in the first week of the shop opening (The Waterboys' *Fisherman's Blues*). The original owner, John, was a friend of the family. My uncle knew I was becoming a music freak, so he introduced me to John and I was delighted to find kindred spirits behind the counter in both John and Mark. They'd run a shop together and knew what they were talking about! I bought all my LPs at Diverse from then on, until I headed out of town to university. In the holidays, I'd badger John for a job, and he relented around 1995, as a part-time position came up. Three years later, John decided to move on, and sold the shop to Mark, Kevin and me!"

"Just after John left, Diverse moved to our current location on Charles Street," adds Jarrett. "It was a bit smaller and a bit cheaper. It's served us well since. I was a customer who started work here in 2007, primarily to run the shop, that was being slightly neglected as the mail-order side grew. I became a partner a couple of years later and now, after Mark and Kevin left, it's just me and Paul. John then ended up selling the Diverse Vinyl label to Paul and myself, too."

The dynamic duo ensured that Diverse operated successfully as a record shop, specialist vinyl label and mail-order outlet. By handling such operations, they've won Diverse an international reputation.

Hawkins notes that when Diverse first shifted to larger premises in 1991 – "just in time for the Nirvana explosion!" – they stocked all formats: "Including tape packs for ravers – remember those?" and did great business. Most importantly, Diverse's founder anticipated an impending resurgence of vinyl, "as we were still stocking LPs while other shops had dropped the format entirely. We were receiving more and more calls from out of town, fans desperate to carry on their vinyl collections. So we set up a mail-order outlet. This proved to be our trump card. What the worldwide web took away

▶

> "WE WERE STOCKING LPS WHILE OTHER SHOPS HAD DROPPED THE FORMAT ENTIRELY. WE WERE RECEIVING CALLS FROM OUT OF TOWN, FANS DESPERATE TO CARRY ON THEIR VINYL COLLECTIONS"
>
> **PAUL HAWKINS**

Shy and the Fig
Mowbird
Trecco Beis
Gintis

PLEASE DON'T LICK
JERICHO SIRENS

JOHNNY CASH
STEVE EARLE
STEVE EARLE
AMERICANA / COUNTRY / BLUEGRASS

Tom Jones
THE TWO RONNIES
Isla St Clair
The Song Story
Lionel Blair
AEROBIC DANCING
NEW

from us in terms of CD sales, it returned in spades of potential to sell vinyl all over the world. We soon became one of the largest independent retailers of vinyl in the country!”

This leads to the fascinating story of how a Newport record shop developed into a leader of the vinyl revival. “Diverse never stopped stocking vinyl, but during peak CD, the dance-music industry basically kept it alive,” says Jarrett. “At that time, people buying those white labels would ring the shop from all over the country. That led to John compiling a database and then a very basic website to make it easier to sell by mail order. That expanded to all the vinyl that was available. Even when I joined, the challenge was to dig around and find vinyl releases to add to our website. Now, it’s far more a case of deciding what not to stock. Ironically, I suppose, given the beginnings, we don’t do an awful lot of dance music anymore.”

> “WHEN I JOINED, THE CHALLENGE WAS TO FIND VINYL RELEASES TO ADD TO OUR WEBSITE. NOW, IT’S MORE A CASE OF DECIDING WHAT NOT TO STOCK
>
> **MATT JARRETT**”

Before the vinyl revival, Diverse experienced the boom that comes when a local music scene receives international attention. “The mid 90s were also a pretty cool time in Newport,” says Jarrett. “It was branded ‘The New Seattle’, with bands like 60ft Dolls, Dub War, Novocaine and Flyscreen flying the flag. The scene was amazing, with American bands, especially punk bands, playing TJ’s and smaller shows happening in Le Pub and local bands playing regularly in The Riverside as well as regular shows at Newport Centre. An ideal place to have a record shop, really.” Newport’s time as a rock hotspot passed, but by then, Diverse was developing into a vinyl outlier.

LICENCE TO THRILL

“Around 2000, 2001, the market was so hungry for vinyl releases that we desperately pitched ideas to labels about what would sell on vinyl,” says Hawkins. “Our strong position in the market had led to us becoming something of a go-to place for information on the vinyl market. Before long, the idea was pitched that if the labels weren’t releasing new albums on vinyl, we could license them ourselves.”

Step in John, Diverse Vinyl’s original owner, who returned to the fold to set up Diverse Records – a vinyl-only label producing audiophile-quality LPs. John has the accolade of licensing the first-ever vinyl releases by Alison Krauss, among others. The label became a benchmark in both the quality of the music, and the vinyl it released. Diverse Vinyl was in a position to give John the heads-up about popular enquiries for vinyl, which fed ideas to Diverse Records about what to pitch for. The label has now been running for 16 years, with over 50 releases under its belt, although such is the demand to turn a profit on physical sales among record labels, it’s becoming increasingly hard to procure licences. “Whenever we approach a copyright holder these days, it’s more often that we give them the idea to press the record themselves! Consequently, our roster has become far more contemporary, and often we deal direct with an artist, looking to make vinyl to sell on tour,” says Hawkins.

Diverse Vinyl caters strongly to online orders, while the shop more reflects its proprietors’ musical tastes. “We’re Diverse by name, diverse by nature,” says Hawkins. “We’ve always been famed for stocking a range of all genres, although it’s much easier to sell what you know about, and as with many independent record shops, the stock does tend to reflect

ALTERNATIVE ROCK
Blind Melon
CRAMPS

L
M
N
O
P
R
S
T
NEARLY NEW

DIVERSE TASTES

Diverse Music's Top 5 Albums

"Hmm, this is tricky, as there's two camps here," says Hawkins. "The shop customers are more contemporary than the mail-order buyers; so while our most popular-selling LP online is *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, by a country mile, shop customers are more likely to snap up the new Manic Street Preachers LP, or something on Third Man Records. When we get behind a new release and practically force it on our regulars, the results can be impressive – just ask The Redlands Palomino Company! I think most of our regulars own at least one of their albums on our recommendation. Both camps buy a lot of Bowie, though." Jarrett adds: "I'm going to stick with shop customers here, because what we sell in the shop and what we sell from the website can be very different. Here are five albums that have all been strong recent sellers…"

COURTNEY MARIE ANDREWS
MAY YOUR KINDNESS REMAIN

THE BREEDERS
ALL NERVE

MANIC STREET PREACHERS
RESISTANCE IS FUTILE

FIRST AID KIT
RUINS

LILLY HIATT
TRINITY LANE

the tastes of its owners. Consequently, you'll find plenty of quirky indie rock, noisy punk, Americana, folk and classic reissues across the board. Again, we'd love to have the space to satisfy more tastes in-store, but for the time being at least, we play to our strengths – this includes US imports for audiophiles, which has become something of a specialism for us over the last 20 years."

NATIONAL EXPOSURE

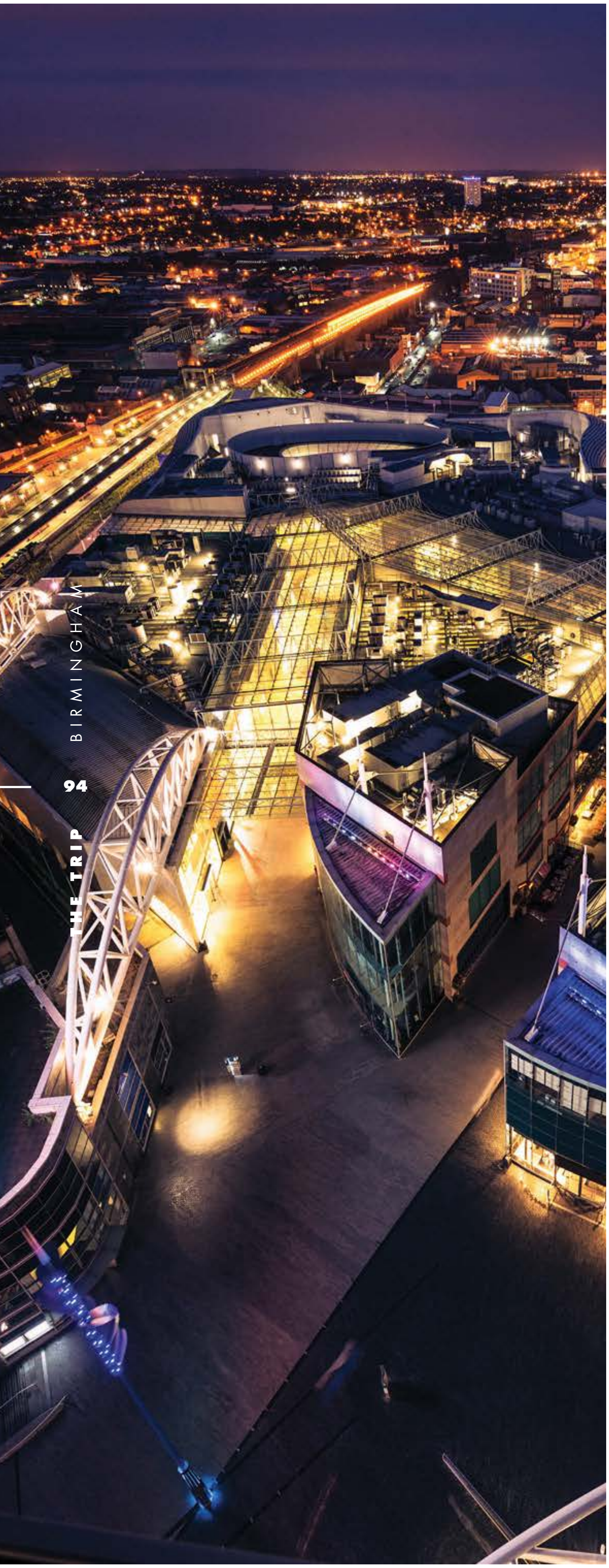
"The shop is massively vinyl orientated and we stock a bit of everything," notes Jarrett. "What Paul said, plus a lot of jazz, blues, folk, soundtracks and a bit of electronica. And a bit of reggae, funk, soul, metal, krautrock and prog, too."

Record Store Day, both men admit, helps – but isn't essential. "It's more a celebration and fun day for our regular crowd, to be honest," says Hawkins.

Like many a good independent record shop, Diverse are involved in booking and promoting live music around Newport. They also have a sense of fun that won them national attention when they issued a calendar which featured shop staff recreating classic album covers in fancy dress. "We made a Christmas card for our regulars with us recreating the cover of Blondie's *Parallel Lines*," explains Jarrett, "and it went down really well, so we decided to recreate another 11 sleeves for a calendar! Queen, The Doors, Kraftwerk, Frank Zappa, *Saturday Night Fever*… and we roped some customers in for *Band On The Run*. We thought we'd sell a few and make a bit of money for Nordoff Robbins, but *Metro* got hold of it, then the tabloids – and we ended up on the BBC website and on HTV Wales news."

"The results were hysterical and terrifying in equal measure," adds Hawkins. "The national coverage helped to sell the calendar out completely." ●

For more information on Diverse Music, go to www.diverserecords.co.uk



The Trip

Birmingham

Despite the city suffering an apparent crisis of cultural confidence, **Mark Elliott**'s visit to Birmingham in search of vinyl treasure reveals a happy hunting ground

Now, if Oprah Winfrey was writing this piece, she would give this city a good talking to. It isn't just the one occasion; it seems to happen almost everywhere: "We've never been good at producing credible bands"; "the shopping isn't as good as it used to be"; "you won't find it like that here"; even "why are you here?". It seems Birmingham is suffering from something of a confidence crisis, and I'd like to suggest that it needs to pull itself together.

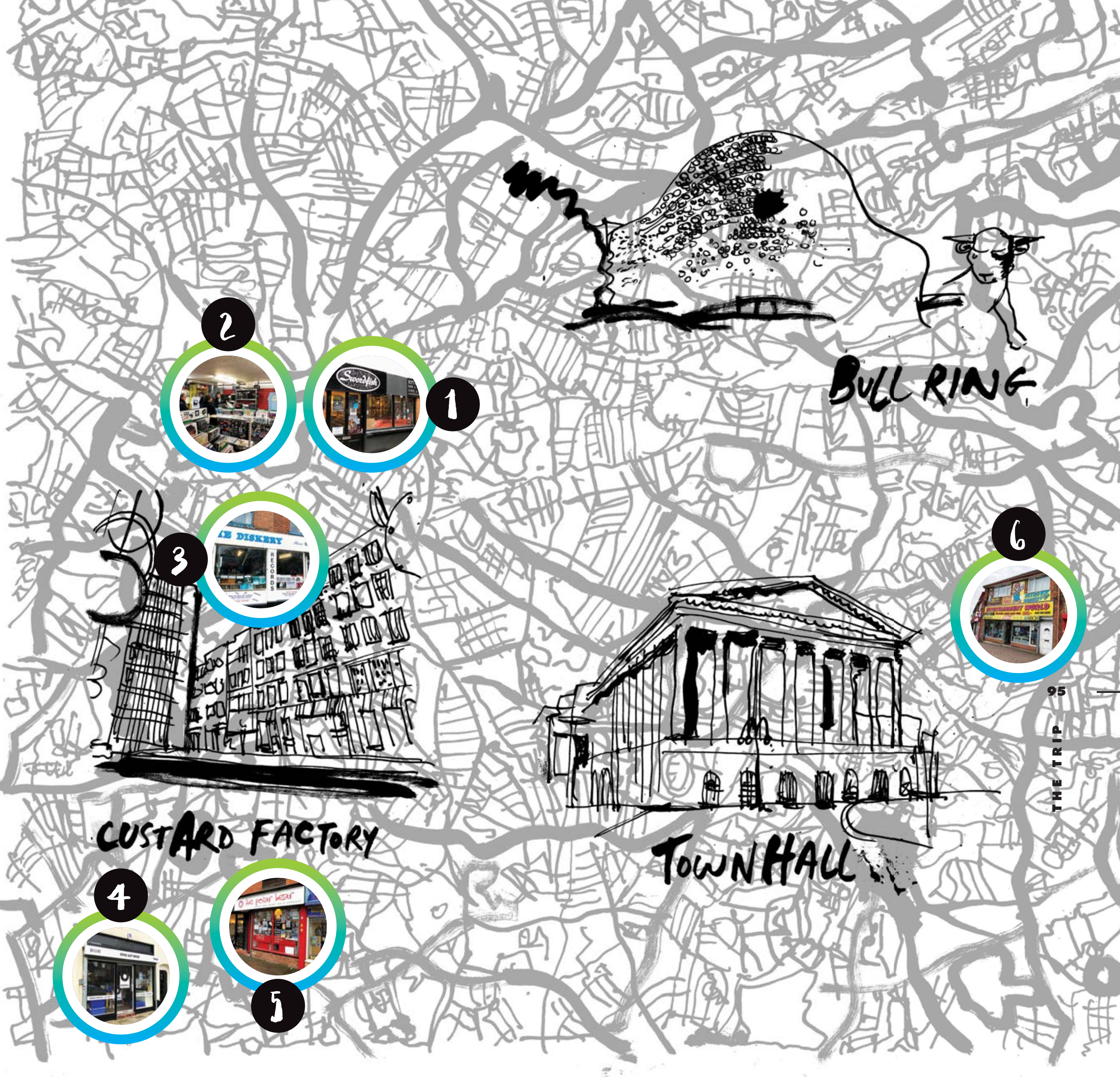
A sense of discretion prevents me from identifying who said what, but it surprises me. True, some much-loved record shops such as Reddingtons have bitten the dust (but some great ones survive); true, Duran Duran aren't The Doors (although they tried to be on 1995's *Thank You*); true, the traffic's a challenge (but parking's a doddle); and, true, for a city this size, vinyl shopping is a little sparser than you'd imagine. But – and it's a significant but – this is the only place where I'm offered a cup of tea while cratedigging; where I find mint New Musik albums in the bargain bins and where I'm offered loads of vintage music magazines – including pristine copies of *The Face* – for less than the price of a latte apiece!

> ***There is plenty to be proud of in Birmingham and, actually, this proves to be one of the best trips I have done***

The great and the good – Steve Winwood and Traffic, Ozzy Osbourne and Black Sabbath, Ali Campbell and UB40, Joan Armatrading, even Toyah, representing just a modest selection, broke out from Birmingham. It's comfortably Britain's second biggest city in terms of its population size (if not its cultural kudos and its own self-confidence), and in the 1960s, there was a live scene as big here as in Liverpool – although only The Move came anywhere close to The Beatles' level of success. In the 1970s, ELO were chasing Wolverhampton neighbours Slade for chart positions; while in the 1980s and 1990s, Duran Duran conquered the world and Ocean Colour Scene briefly captured the Britpop zeitgeist.

More recently, The Streets made some impact, and the 'B-Town' indie scene excites music journalists (but few others). So there is plenty to be proud of here and, actually, this proves to be one of the best trips I have done – some great finds, a decent range of different stores and, unusually, hassle-free navigation around a wide area. Without the car, I'd have struggled, but this is true of the majority of these trips, I find, and there's more than enough here to fill the day – particularly if you want to try some of the stores further afield (such as Oldies in Wolverhampton). So, park your prejudices at the door – I'm tasking Birmingham with some self-belief. The place even has a Walk Of Stars celebrating Jeff Lynne, Roy Wood and Noddy Holder. Point proven, I'd say!

Illustration Ben Talon


BULL RING
CUSTARD FACTORY
TOWN HALL
1
2
3
4
5
6
Swordfish
THE DISKERY
RECORDS
the polar bear
ENTERTAINMENT WORLD

❶ SWORDFISH
66 Dalton Street, B4 7LX
swordfishrecords.co.uk
Opening hours
10am to 5.30pm Monday to Saturday

❷ IGNITE RECORD STORE
Level 2 Oasis Market,
110-114 Corporation Street, B4 6SX
facebook.com/igniterecordstore
Opening hours
10am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday; 10am to 6pm Saturday

❸ THE DISKERY
99-102 Bromsgrove Street, B5 6QB
thediskery.com
Opening hours
9.30am to 6pm Monday to Saturday

❹ EMORTAL RECORDS
1 Bournville Lane, B30 2JY
facebook.com/emortal.rec
Opening hours
10am to 6pm Monday to Saturday

❺ THE POLAR BEAR
10 York Road, Kings Heath, B14 7RZ
Opening hours
11am to 6pm Monday to Saturday

❻ ENTERTAINMENT WORLD
5 The Radleys, Sheldon, B33 0QY
entertainmentworld.co.uk
Opening hours
11am to 7pm Monday to Saturday; 11am to 4pm Sunday

① SWORDFISH

For the first decade of its life, Swordfish was known as Rockers, but the 1989 name change also saw the first move to new premises (a tradition the much-loved indie has maintained, with a handful of different locations over the years). "They keep knocking down our buildings, so we have to move," says Gaz, who launched the shop with Mike as a place to shift punk, post-punk and, later, New Romantic material. Hurst Street became Needless Alley, before a long run at Temple Street led to its current home in Dalton Street (around the corner from the law courts and opposite a nicely placed – but eye-wateringly expensive – car park). "This place was a dance shop back in the 90s and it's working out for us okay," Gaz tells me. "We're central, and people make a point of popping in if they're coming into town. A lot of record shops closed because they failed to adapt. We went from being a chart-return shop – those reps used to run cars that were like mobile off-licences, with the amount of 'gifts' they used to pass on – back to the more sort-of niche retailer we are again today. We lost so many local indies along the way – Plastic Factory, Revolver – but we're holding our own. In a way, it's a shame things like Record Store Day weren't around in the 90s, as that sort of initiative might have helped some of them survive." Vinyl has always been on sale here, but Gaz insists it remains just part of the wider retail mix. "When we moved here, we expanded the new section, as we just weren't sure we'd get enough decent second-hand stock but, actually, that hasn't been the case. There's still a load of good stuff about. But I still see a place for CDs, too." Classic indie, rock and reggae makes up the majority of the material here but, as in all the best shops, there's a little of everything (including some great soul). Swordfish is a Birmingham institution – with connections to Duran Duran, The Lilac Time and many others – and, with its buoyant label and now being signed up to Record Store Day, it continues to evolve. If it does ever move again, can I request a cheaper car park?

② IGNITE RECORDS

Specialising in indie, metal, punk and hardcore, this business is tucked away in an indoor market. Rick Perry has run the place for eight years after previously working at much-missed retailer Tempest, which closed its doors in 2010 after 40 years in the city. Rick also uses the place as a daytime base for his Speedowax Records that has released vinyl for Senseless Things and Jesus Jones, among others. Ignite supports Record Store Day in a big way and shifts discs from a decent range of acts, as illustrated by the wide range on its racks. "We do tend to follow the steer set by something like [BBC] Radio 6, but I try to keep things as broad as I can," says Rick, "although it's not so much students that come in, but more your 30-to-40-somethings." I finally pick up the Little Mix album from last year's Record Store Day on glorious neon-pink vinyl, and Lady Gaga's *Joanne*. It's new vinyl you'll find here and prices are very competitive. Don't be put off if metal isn't your bag – I find Ignite has the best selection of new vinyl in the city centre, giving even the Bullring's HMV a run for its money on price and range.

> ***The Diskery is the perfect place for the sort of cratedigging I adore. The quirky, the celebrated and the never likely to shift are piled high***

③ THE DISKERY

Many years from now, when these features are adapted into a spectacular production at the National Theatre, it's likely The Diskery will feature largely as the inspiration for my Olivier Award-winning script. It's a shop steeped in atmosphere and charm. Lee The Boss, Liam The Oracle, Danny The Reggae and Paul The Synth make up the team that keeps this Brum institution winning and its punters refreshed with welcome cups of tea. Starting life as a jazz specialist in 1952, The Diskery has been in this location since 1972 and features in Graham Jones' 2009 book on the challenges faced by record retailing, *Last Shop Standing*. The Diskery's founder sadly died in 2012, but much of Morris Hunting's legacy continues to thrive (with many of the staff having worked here for decades). With a décor determined to preserve past glories – faded posters and little-remembered sleeves – it's the perfect place for the sort of cratedigging I adore. The quirky, the celebrated and the never likely to shift are piled high (although there is a decent order to what, at first, looks like a challenge for the archivist in me). "Saturday is always a special day for us," says Liam (The Oracle). "Our Saturdays take me back to the days of old, when people got paid and went out to buy an album. We get kids coming in now and they're getting hooked on all sorts of stuff – one young lad loves his 60s singles. It's great!" Across three old houses, there are literally tens of thousands of records here – with far more out back than are displayed in the front. "The shop was always jazz-based, so we have, say, about 12,000 78s; but we carry a bit of everything, to be honest. We get people trying to sell stuff all the time. One lady came in and every LP had been stickered with notes from Discogs. It was quite a negotiation!" Some sellers aren't so clued up. While I'm there, Lee takes a call from a hopeful trader. "What are the records?" asks Lee, naturally enough. "Like CDs, only bigger and blacker", he's told. Predictably, I buy a very random mix: including Foreigner's *Agent Provocateur* opus, moody synth material from early Icehouse, some Erasure promos and The Real Thing's fantastic debut.

The Trip

Getting there

Birmingham is served well by Britain's motorway network and you'll find it quicker to get to all these shops by car, as the outlying places can take 15-to-20 minutes to drive to from the city centre. Parking is plentiful and largely good value (the ones by the law courts aside). The Diskery has a big public car lot nearby and almost all of the other shops featured are situated in areas that let you stop for an hour for free. If you're visiting by public transport, the bus network is good, and birmingham.gov.uk has lots of travel tips. From London, trains to the city take just over an hour and 20 minutes. Most major rail routes in the UK take you to Birmingham New Street.

④ EMORTAL

With a recent decision to stock more metal and rock, this largely dance specialist apparently does a brisk business, particularly at weekends. Weekday opening times can be a bit patchy, but try calling the phone number listed on the door to see if entry can be secured. No luck for me on this occasion, though. When I call back briefly a second time, I'm still unable to visit. But I'm told the place is often packed, and the stock – lots of white labels and promo sets – looks fresh through the window. It's here I get talking to one of the locals, who again describes the city as somewhere lacking in much credibility. I'd beg to differ – Emortal looks like it has been transplanted from somewhere like Hoxton or Brighton!

⑤ THE POLAR BEAR

A bit of a drive out of the centre (but no more than 15 minutes) and you find Kings Heath. The Polar Bear has been here since 1991 and was once part of a chain that included sites in Leeds, Manchester and Oxford. Steve Bull has carefully kept this shop going with a good mix of material. "There are only two types of music, the stuff you like and the stuff you don't," he tells me. I like this philosophy, but it's unusual in someone who loves vinyl. "I love music, but I don't really collect it," says Steve. "As I get older, my tastes – like most people's, I guess – narrow a little, but I enjoy the fact that some of the old barriers are breaking down." There's a bit of second-hand vinyl on the racks (and I relieve him of a couple of Ultravox albums), but it's new records that predominate. We discuss the city's record-shop closures and Steve admits trading has been tough over the years. "I actually find mainstream pop and indie is struggling a bit now," he tells me. "And the soundtracks used to do better than they do now, but business is still okay, although I know some people are finding the prices a bit steep for vinyl generally." The Polar Bear takes part in Record Store Day, with bands playing, but Steve has resisted the idea of widening his stock the rest of the year to include lots more second-hand discs or any singles at all. "There have to be some limits and I still find people dropping off old collections, so I need to keep room for that." With free parking limited to a single hour (but just outside the shop), I'm off… but The Polar Bear has been a great pit stop!

6 ENTERTAINMENT WORLD

A bit further out of the city, Sheldon is one of those places you can't imagine there are rich record pickings to be had. The parade of shops it's situated in doesn't bode well – all Post Offices, cafés and hair salons – but actually, there's a lot of vinyl out the back of this store, that ranges from the genuinely collectable (The KLF's fantastic *The White Room*, VG+, very reasonable price) to the curious (an *Opportunity Knocks* compilation from 1974). It won't surprise you for a second that both end up in my bag of spoils. With much of the first half of the store devoted to toys, games and assorted memorabilia, the second-hand vinyl has become a big part of the turnover in the past five years. "It's surprising what people are still bringing in," says owner Rob Hadley. "I've had a punk collection, where the guy selling it had never owner a record player, so all the discs were mint." It's here that I pick up a huge haul of pristine 1980s music and style magazines – for a fraction of the price I'd pay almost anywhere else. The records are great, too, and being second-hand, there's a wealth of archive material still attached to them (who remembers local store WJ Taylor Ltd, that was selling Blue Zoo 12"s for £1.99 back in1982?). I love these old price stickers (although can do without the biro scribbles – usually names or dedications – that plague sleeves for collectors like you and me). There's a rare copy of folk/rock act Blackthorn's *II Electric Folk* – not what you'd expect to find in a shop like this! More predictably, I pick up a decent set of Sting 12"s from the 90s that are generally hard to source, the rare numbered 12" picture disc for Tears For Fears' *Woman In Chains*, some Numan and a stack of great soul. There's even a bit of Italo disco, no doubt picked up on some foreign holiday back in the day. Entertainment World proves that a bit of effort to travel further afield can pay off, big time. This is one of those hidden gems that makes record collecting all the more thrilling. ●

> *I pick up a huge haul of pristine 1980s music and style magazines – for a fraction of the price I'd pay almost anywhere else*

Top five

1 FAIRGROUND ATTRACTION
Birmingham hosts a lot of record fairs. With the Custard Factory undergoing a refurb, VIP Fairs has relocated to MAC (Midlands Art Centre), out near Cannon Hill Park (check vip-24.com for next dates). There's a popular one in Bromsgrove and a recent one was held at Shirley Community Centre (midlandsrecordfairs.co.uk), with more planned.

2 THE WHEELS ON THE BUS…
Although I didn't have time to try it, there's an interesting-looking music walking tour available here in Britain's second city. Check out birminghammusictours.com and let me know how you find it! A bus tour did something similar a year or so back, but has now stopped running.

3 REMEMBER THE TIME
The Birmingham Music Archive is a fantastic digital heritage project that's trying to preserve the city's collective memories. Although updates can be sporadic, there's a wealth of stuff stored here already (birminghammusicarchive.com) – including a section on lost record shops!

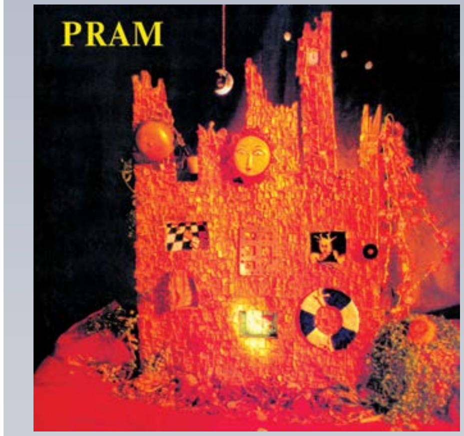
4 THE MUSIC OF THE NIGHT
The city's blessed with some great music venues. From the large-scale (Genting Arena) to the medium (Town Hall) and intimate (Hare & Hounds), there's a wide range of stuff to catch if you can make it an overnighter. The 02 Institute, near the Bullring, is generally regarded as the place to catch acts just as they're breaking into the top tier. Livebrum.co.uk offers a great overview of what's on.

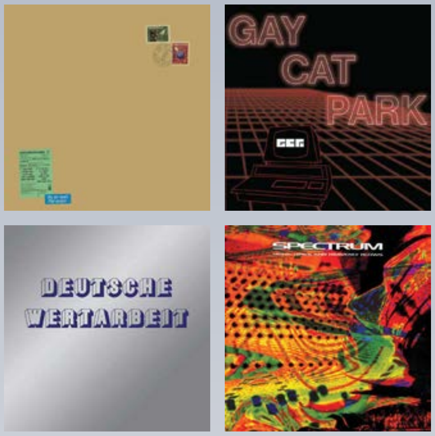
5 FURTHER AFIELD
If your budget is not blown by what's on offer in the shops in Brum, then my top tip is a trip on to Sutton Coldfield (about 30 minutes north by car). Psychotron Records is a real gem (psychotronrecords.co.uk) and even runs its own label.

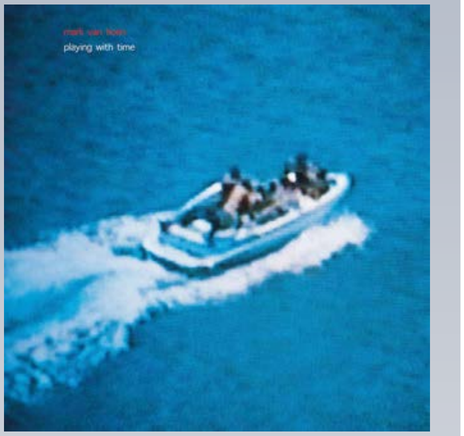
THE BIG REISSUE

Medical Records

A love of new wave, synth-pop and shoegaze spurred this US vinyl lover to augment his medical career with his own reissue operation. **Chris Parkin** talks to Troy Wadsworth…







Troy Wadsworth doesn't have a music-industry backstory. There's no stint in the archive department of a now-defunct label. No dalliances as an A&R. Instead, he's been studying and working in medicine since the early 90s, moving around the US incurring and paying off medical-training debts, before landing in Seattle in 2007. After settling down for the first time in years, Troy decided to do something he's always wanted to – start releasing music. And what better name to give his label than – drumroll, please – Medical Records?

"It was the ultimate in-joke," laughs Troy. But it's a punchline that's been a long time in the delivery. Troy first thought about reissuing his favourite obscure music in 1992, as a young pre-grad shoegazer in thrall to Mercury Rev, My Bloody Valentine and, no surprises here, Medicine. But he was a stony-broke student and his dream remained just that – until he reissued Deutsche Wertarbeit's wonky self-titled 1981 album in 2010, after snaffling up a cheap original copy of the late-period kosmische classic during the early years of eBay.

What drove Troy to follow his obsession with new wave and synth music to its logical conclusion was witnessing, as a casual collector, the value of so many important records begin to climb. "I really started digging deep into obscure wave, synth and disco in the early 2000s and I quickly realised how expensive it was becoming to get some of the singles and LPs I wanted. I was intrigued by Vinyl On Demand and Minimal Wave, how they were making these gems available again on wax. And I thought… you know? I should do this!"

Troy admits that Medical Records was, for a while, a place that peddled only cold wave, synth-pop and Italo-disco reissues, but he's since returned to his love of shoegaze, reissuing classics by former Too Pure bands Laika and Pram. For Record Store Day this year, he reissued *Highs, Lows And Heavenly Blows* by Spectrum – the celestial synth-drone project piloted by Spacemen 3's Sonic Boom. Now Troy is dipping into techno and contemporary releases, too, as he continues to dig a well of (mostly) synth-based weirdness. All it has to do to get a release, he says, is pass his personal test.

> MEDICAL RECORDS WAS A PLACE THAT PEDDLED ONLY COLD WAVE, SYNTH-POP AND ITALO-DISCO REISSUES, BUT TROY HAS RETURNED TO HIS LOVE OF SHOEGAZE, REISSUING CLASSICS BY FORMER TOO PURE BANDS LAIKA AND PRAM

You can find out what's made the cut on Medical Records' Bandcamp page, and on Troy's Discogs profile, sinewave93, which is stocked not just with Medical wares, but those from European distributors and labels he likes, new finds, and his own used records. The proceeds of this Discogs trading are ploughed back into the label, helping Troy fund what looks like another bumper year for Medical.

"I'm a huge Locust, Seefeel and Mark Van Hoen fanatic," Troy says of his love for ambient electronica. "I have another amazing reissue coming out next month, Mark Van Hoen's *Playing With Time*, as well as some unreleased Locust material from the 90s in the pipeline. I'd like to work on some more of what I consider 'crucial' shoegaze records, too. Plenty of ideas, but probably not enough time!" ●

ROLLING STONES
FROM THE VAULT
1999
NO SECURITY.
SAN JOSE '99

The Rolling Stones

FROM THE VAULT: NO SECURITY, SAN JOSE '99

EAGLE ROCK

The Stones' 1999 No Security tour of North America and Europe was a concerted effort to get back to basics. Gone were the excesses of the stadium gigs of their global *Bridges To Babylon* jaunt, in favour of the relative intimacy of arenas. This 3LP, 20-track show culled from their appearance in San José is – with very few exceptions – a peerless spin through the highlights of their back catalogue. Jagger is better when dialling down the stadium histrionics, and the band sprints out of the blocks with *Jumpin' Jack Flash* and *Bitch*'s horn-packed riffage. The witty *You Got Me Rocking* boasts tasty slide from Ronnie Wood, while Chuck Leavell shines on a loose and lively *Honky Tonk Women*. There's an abrupt stylistic shift for *Paint It Black*, although this full-tilt version sacrifices the dark menace of its studio counterpart.

The home straight on Disc 3 is stunning. The band achieve lift-off on a lascivious *Midnight Rambler* before a triple whammy of *Start Me Up*, an extended *Brown Sugar* and *Sympathy For The Devil*. Even when you can see the flaws, their status as the world's finest rock 'n' roll band has never really been in jeopardy. *Steve Harnell*

VERDICT

8/10

TEENAGE FANCLUB BANDWAGONESQUE
Teenage Fanclub
Songs From Northern Britain
Teenage Fanclub
thirteen
GRAND
Teenage Fanclub
WDY!

Teenage Fanclub

REMASTERED VINYL REISSUE SERIES

SONY

It is, of course, absolutely compulsory when reviewing the Fannies' back catalogue to namedrop the influence of The Byrds, and most notably, Big Star. We won't break from that convention here, but it's also worth noting just how consistent the Bellshill indie rockers have been over the past quarter of a century; they've barely put a foot wrong since their quiet emergence in the early 90s. This five-album series of reissues of their finest work on vinyl – they've long been out of print – is a timely reminder of a sterling back catalogue. Picks of the bunch are *Bandwagonesque* from 1991 and 1995's *Grand Prix*. The former – released at the height of grunge – may have featured the odd nod to feistiness on gnarly feedback-drenched tracks such as *Satan*, but this was the work of a band in thrall to melodic songwriting. They then refined the process for *Grand Prix*, with its clutch of instant classics including *About You*, *Sparky's Dream* and the punsome *Mellow Doubt*. The experimental *Thirteen* (1993) has improved with age, while *Songs From Northern Britain*, released in 1997, showcases an understated band that's thoroughly at ease with itself. Their major-label excursion *Howdy!* from 2000 plays to their strengths, and is also worthy of re-examination. *Steve Harnell*

VERDICT

8/10

LONG LIVE VINYL
CHOICE

Guns N' Roses

APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION

GEFFEN/UME

Three decades have passed since the sleazy rock 'n' roll of *Appetite For Destruction* conquered an unsuspecting world; and this expansive celebration, in a dizzying array of formats, is a G N' R fan's ultimate fantasy fulfilled. The remastered 180g audiophile double-vinyl version of the album (£27.99), with its limited-edition slipcase and a 'Hologroove Hologram' on Side 4, is special enough; but the full 10,000-run *Locked N' Loaded Edition* (£850) is Universal Music's most sumptuous boxset ever. The "bombardment of collectibles" it contains ranges from a dozen 12x12-inch lithos of new track illustrations to a 96-page booklet with photos from Axl Rose's personal archive. Aside from the newly remastered and 5.1 Blu-ray versions of the album itself and 12 remastered tracks compiled from EPs and B-sides of the era, of overriding interest is the release of 25 unreleased demos from a 1986 Sound City recording session. The undoubted motherlode is the 1986 run-through of the majority of songs that made up *Appetite*...'s playlist a year later. Despite the intriguing but inferior *Shadow Of Your Love* and covers of *Heartbreak Hotel* and *Jumpin' Jack Flash* in place of *Mr. Brownstone*, *It's So Easy* and *Sweet Child O' Mine*, the road-honed set, brimming with fire and energy, is all-but record-ready. Urchins living under the street they may have been, but they'd put the work in: this is the sound of lightning being captured in a bottle. *Owen Bailey*

VERDICT

9/10

What's That Sound?
Buffalo Springfield
Complete Albums Collection

Buffalo Springfield

WHAT'S THAT SOUND? COMPLETE ALBUMS COLLECTION

ATCO/RHINO

Neil Young and Stephen Stills locked horns for the first time in Buffalo Springfield, and this five-disc collection rounds up their three-album legacy (the eponymous debut and follow-up are afforded stereo and mono variants). Newly remastered, more prominence has been given to Bruce Palmer's bass parts, further punch is added to the percussion and the band's triple-guitar attack bites even harder. Springfield wear their influences on their sleeves for the debut, but it still oozes confidence – from the Byrdsian jangle of *Go And Say Goodbye* to the Beatles-esque *Sit Down, I Think I Love You* and the anthemic *For What It's Worth*. Young's *Nowadays Clancy Can't Even Sing* shows an ambition to break free of the two-minute-pop straitjacket, a move fully realised on wonderful second LP *Buffalo Springfield Again*, an impressive leap in terms of production and scope. Young rewrites the Stones' *Satisfaction* riff for the rollicking *Mr. Soul* and Stills contributes the funky *Bluebird*, a precursor to his CSN work. But it's the former who takes the spoils here, with the multi-part *Expecting To Fly* and *Broken Arrow*. Final LP *Last Time Around* was completed after the Springfield had split, but Young's *I Am A Child* and the Latin-flavoured Stills workout *Uno Mundo* are standouts. *Steve Harnell*

VERDICT

8/10

THE STEVEN WILSON REMIXES
YES

Yes

THE STEVEN WILSON REMIXES

RHINO

Over the past five years, prog maestro Steven Wilson has been entrusted with revamping the cream of Yes's back catalogue. Timed to coincide with the band's half-century anniversary, this impressive five-album boxset cherrypicks from the best of the early-70s output and comprises *The Yes Album*, *Fragile*, *Close To The Edge*, *Tales From Topographic Oceans* and *Relayer*. Wilson's work brings clarity to these mixes – it's gimmick-free but empathic, and Yes have never sounded better. The band made giant strides towards crystallising their sound with the signing of Steve Howe for *The Yes Album* and they rock hard on standout *Yours Is No Disgrace*. Rick Wakeman's arrival for *Fragile* resulted in their best album to date, bettered only by its follow-up *Close To The Edge*. *Topographic…* is a curate's egg, where their vaulting ambition and pretentiousness found Yes overreaching themselves; only to rein it in on the muscular *Relayer*, which dips into jazz fusion. *Steve Harnell*

VERDICT

7/10

ZZ TOP
CINCO
Nº.2
THE SECOND
FIVE LPs

ZZ Top

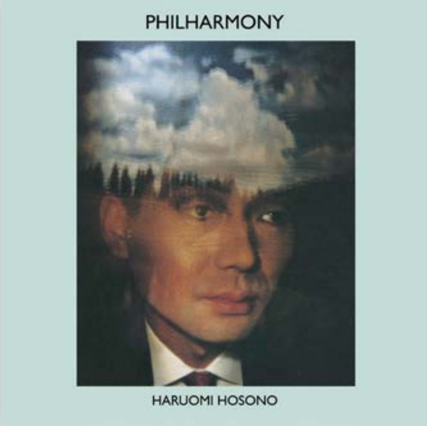
CINCO NO. 2: THE SECOND FIVE LPS

RHINO

This collection covers the band's output from 1979 to 1990 – *Degüello*, *El Loco*, *Eliminator*, *Afterburner* and *Recycler*. The recordings included here display ZZ Top's move from the raw, boogie-driven blues of *La Grange* and *Just Got Paid* and introduced a synth sound that became instantly recognisable (and extremely popular) the world over. There are hits galore throughout this anthology, from *Degüello*'s *Cheap Sunglasses* to *Eliminator*'s *Gimme All Your Lovin'*, *Legs* and *Sharp Dressed Man*. *Afterburner*'s *Rough Boy* showcases the trio's tender side, but *Recycler*'s *My Head's In Mississippi* marks a welcome return to the dirtier side of the blues. Some may say that this run of albums was too formulaic, and that their overtly technology-led sound had made them too commercial, but that'd be missing the point. *Cinco No. 2* proves that while ZZ Top at first appeared to consist of unique looks and hooks, they undoubtedly had the musical chops to pull it off. *Alex Duce*

VERDICT

7/10



Haruomi Hosono

PHILHARMONY/PARAISO/ OMNI SIGHT SEEING

LIGHT IN THE ATTIC

A veteran of acclaimed late-60s Japanese psych-folk-rock act Happy End and electronic pioneers Yellow Magic Orchestra, 70-year-old Haruomi 'Harry' Hosono has amassed a vast solo catalogue, mostly previously unavailable outside his homeland. These reissues mark the start of a series and 1978's *Paraiso* is most accessible: a lovely, laid-back collection sometimes comparable to YMO, as on *Shimendoka*, but it also takes in *Tokio Rush*'s playful yacht rock, *Shambhala Signal*'s percussive bells, and the literally titled *Japanese Rhumba*. 1982's *Philharmony* spearheaded the use of samplers, matching kettle drums on *Funiculi Funicura* to 80s arcade sounds, tapping up Steve Reich on *Luminescent-Hotaru*, and showcasing quirky pop on *Sports Men*. 1989's *Omni Sight Seeing*, meanwhile, drew on global sounds, whether on *Orgone Box*'s mix of silky pop and sneaking weirdness, *Caravan*'s easy listening or *Laugh-Gas*'s proto-techno. An irrepressible innovator. *Wyndham Wallace*

VERDICT

8/10

PICTISH TRAIL
FUTURE ECHOES

Pictish Trail

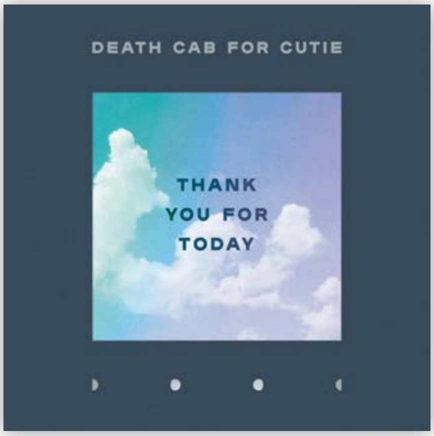
FUTURE ECHOES

FIRE RECORDS

Expanded by the addition of three reinterpretations with Suse Bear, a White Poppy remix, three live tracks and a BBC session track, Johnny Lynch's 2016 collection definitely deserves a second chance. Recorded with Domino Recordings' Adem Ilhan – once part of Fridge, alongside Kieran Hebden – it offers much the same pleasures as The Beta Band's early releases, especially on the soothing *Strange Sun* and appealingly sluggish opener *Far Gone (Don't Leave)*. Admittedly, it's more polished, so much that, despite its throttled vocals, *Lionhead*'s anthemic chorus threatens to turn into U2's *Bad*, while *Until Now* flaunts the same sensitivity and comparable arrangements to the more melancholic moments of Radiohead's *In Rainbows*. Otherwise, though, there's a starry-eyed innocence anchoring the record and belying its more morbid lyrical themes. With Lynch's voice multitracked like a choir on *Rhombus* and a delicious melancholy to *Who's Comin' In?*, its minimalist opening slowly unfurls as though Caribou were remixing Loney Dear. *Wyndham Wallace*

VERDICT

8/10



Death Cab For Cutie

THANK YOU FOR TODAY

ATLANTIC RECORDS

With *Transatlanticism* and *Plans*, Death Cab For Cutie were lauded for some of the most emotionally charged albums of the 2000s. *Thank You For Today*, their ninth album, is the first without founding member Chris Walla and finds the band back in the studio with producer Rich Costey, who also helmed 2015's underwhelming *Kintsugi*. Opening pair *I Dreamt We Spoke Again* and *Summer Years* see the band indulge their synth-pop sensibilities, while *Your Hurricane* and *When We Drive* drift along with a pleasant shoegazey sway. Early treats, indeed; however, Death Cab seem content to plunder Killers-eque indietronic pop hooks, and songs such as *Autumn Love*, *Northern Lights*, and lead single *Gold Rush* all possess a tepid jingle-jangle, indie earworm that will drive you insane. As a complete body of work, *Thank You For Today* sounds as if it was made by a band wanting to sound relevant by moving forward, but somehow remaining haunted by the past; which is perfectly realised in the desolate closer (and highlight) *60 & Punk*. *Dan Biggane*

VERDICT

6/10

Gorillaz

THE NOW NOW

PARLOPHONE

Gorillaz are famed for their extensive collaborations over the years, working with the likes of Shaun Ryder, De La Soul, Grace Jones and countless others. On their sixth LP, they've largely ditched this approach and instead have allowed the vocals of Damon Albarn to lead the record. However, the most crucial contributor to the album is Simian Mobile Disco man and producer James Ford. The distinctly more electronic approach feels rooted in his touch. Ironically, the rare example of a collaboration on this record – via the Snoop Dogg-featuring *Hollywood* – is its most potent and alive moment. Overall, the album is a subtle one; monster pop hits take a back seat for understated grooves, gently pulsing electronics and glistening melody. It's largely a success, and for a project that's synonymous with having so much crammed in to it, it's a welcome shift to experience something a little more relaxed and sparse. *Daniel Dylan Wray*

VERDICT

7/10

THE GASLIGHT ANTHEM
LONG LIVE VINYL
CHOICE

The Gaslight Anthem

THE '59 SOUND SESSIONS

SIDEONEDUMMY

When The Gaslight Anthem dropped their sophomore album *The '59 Sound* 10 years ago, much was made of the band bridging the gap between generations. Here was a modern punk-rock outfit that appealed to fans of the rock 'n' roll icons who informed their formation. It's no surprise to learn that numbers such as *High Lonesome* and the album's title track still sound fresh and full of youthful vigour on this companion album. Some may question whether a record only celebrating its 10th anniversary deserves such treatment; yet *The '59 Sound Sessions* features unreleased rarities, a lush 60-page photobook and acts as the ideal companion piece. It includes early versions of favourites such as *Great Expectations* and *Miles Davis & The Cool*, as well as the previously unheard *Placeholder* and traditional folk standard *God's Gonna Cut You Down*. An ageless classic.
Dan Biggane

VERDICT
9/10

DEVOTION
TIRZAH

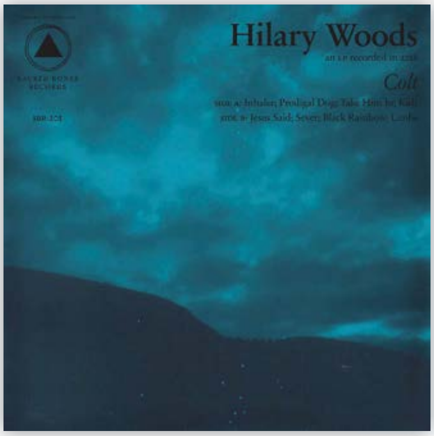
Tirzah

DEVOTION

DOMINO

Tirzah's sought-after 2013 collaboration with her old university pal Mica Levi, *I'm Not Dancing*, sells for £30-plus on Discogs these days, and the pair's addictive 2015 wonk-step banger, *Make It Up*, will command more if it ever sees a much-demanded vinyl release. But while Levi is better known for doing her own thing, such as scoring Bafta- and Oscar-nominated soundtracks, Essex-born Tirzah has kept a low profile. Until now. Sharing a similarly oblique lo-fi pop aesthetic with Levi, who produced *Devotion* alongside Kwes, Tirzah's debut album is a moody, lo-fi future-soul document about surviving the inner city, informed by twilight bus journeys home, heartbreak and relentless claustrophobia. Pieced together from half-remembered sounds of club nights, old soul and gospel tunes chopped and screwed into eternity, the classical music of her studies, and Tirzah's own soulful but careworn Estuary twang, this is heartfelt art-pop that tilts the world at its true, lopsided angle. *Chris Parkin*

VERDICT
8/10



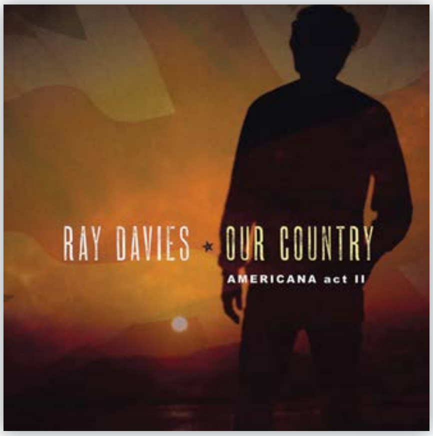
Hilary Woods

COLT

SACRED BONES

That the first half-minute of Hilary Woods' solo debut offers little more than a single, gently swelling synth chord, and that it's then joined by just a simple, stately piano line, indicates clearly that the days of her former band, JJ72, and their Undertones-meets-U2 anthems, are long behind her. Sure, drums arrive a minute into *Inhaler*, but at a funereal pace, and it's her fragile, feminine voice – robed in reverb like Julee Cruise's *Falling* – that instead fills these sepulchral spaces. The eerie *Twin Peaks* vibe is maintained convincingly throughout, as Woods' hushed voice urges us "Don't be afraid" on the gauzy *Take Him In*. *Jesus Said*, with Woods quietly intoning "Give me back my skin/ I want to live in it", could even be described as gothic, were its initially unsettling gloom not so appealing, and its percussive coda, complete with rippling, Roger Eno-like piano melodies, so pretty.
Wyndham Wallace

VERDICT
8/10



Ray Davies

OUR COUNTRY: AMERICANA ACT II

SONY LEGACY

Ray Davies goes all out on his latest album, while simultaneously going nowhere. It's a follow-up to his 2017 offering and supposedly "follows my journey across America; through endless tours not just to reclaim The Kinks' career, but to rediscover the country that offered me my earliest inspirations". There are hints of Davies' natural songwriting charm, but there are also cringeworthy moments of self indulgence, earnest sentimentality and peculiar spoken-word songs that act like unedited diary entries. The record weaves between country, folk, rock, pop and, as the title suggests, Americana. The opener, *Our Country*, resembles Spiritualized for a brief moment of promise, but soon dissolves into tired country cliché. Davies uses this record to dip back into his old memory box and career, on interludes such as *The Invaders*, while proclaiming he'll seek revenge for his shooting in New Orleans on *Epilogue*. For all the reflection taking place, it just makes one yearn for the Davies of old. *Daniel Dylan Wray*

VERDICT

6/10

SNAIL MAIL
LUSH

Snail Mail

LUSH

MATADOR

The turbulence of youth lies at the heart of this moody yet mature debut from 18-year-old Baltimore singer-songwriter Lindsey Jordan. A classically trained guitarist from the age of five, Jordan's alternative tunings and lo-fi playing are the foundations of a record that wrestles with the joy, pain and confusion of growing up. She ponders: "Is there any better feeling than coming clean?" on the sprawling, scratchy *Pristine* – an early highlight on an album of expansive late-night alt-rock reflections. Jordan explores heartbreak to anthemic effect on *Heat Wave*, abetted by some biting fuzzy lead guitar, while the short-and-sweet slow-burning road song *Let's Find An Out* features a gently fingerpicked 12-string as Jordan wistfully observes from the window of a tour van: "You're always coming back a little older/ But it looks alright on you". These are songs written on the move, dealing with transience, both physical and metaphorical, from a writer of impressive depth. *Gary Walker*

VERDICT

7/10

Nine Inch Nails

BAD WITCH

CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL

This won't take long, but it's going to hurt. NiN have gone for the short, sharp shock treatment. You'll know this from lead single *God Break Down The Door*: jamming with what sounds like Radiohead's *Bangers And Mash*, Trent Reznor wields a saxophone and adopts the croon David Bowie employed in more experimental moments, abruptly breaking off mid-song, confident the band will floor anyone within five miles when they kick back in. No less uncompromising is the frighteningly distorted *Shit Mirror*, like Lemmy with The Jesus And Mary Chain in the back of a crashing truck; while *Ahead Of Ourselves* finds Reznor berating humanity's arrogance. *I'm Not From This World* sounds like the tense minutes in a sci-fi movie before the final showdown, and though the sax-embellished *Over And Out* is more subdued, *Play The Goddamned Part* is no less menacing for being instrumental. It's all pretty brutal, then… Brace yourself. *Wyndham Wallace*

VERDICT

7/10

ERASURE
World Be Live

Erasure

WORLD BE LIVE

MUTE

"If all else fails," Andy Bell announces, "dip your head in a bucket of glitter." This, arguably, is the secret to Erasure's success. It's not that they're afraid of being serious, but the night captured here is a nostalgic celebration, not a solemn occasion. *World Be Live*'s unstoppable 90 minutes find Bell pausing only for more such entertaining interjections; whether introducing Vince Clarke's nephew on guitar for a rousing *Just A Little Love*, or discussing, before a faithful rendition of 1988's *Chains Of Love*, the perils of his tights wrinkling like Nora Batty's. Furthermore, along the way to a victorious climax – featuring a dynamic *Sometimes* and jubilant *A Little Respect* – they return to their debut single, *Who Needs Love Like That*, toss in a reverent cover of Blondie's *Atomic*, and still manage to emerge from the glitter long enough for a poignantly restrained version of *Take Me Out Of Myself*... they've lost none of their sparkle.

Wyndham Wallace

VERDICT

8/10

ShadowParty

ShadowParty

SHADOWPARTY

MUTE

Arguably, most records involving a New Order member tend to sound like a lesser version of that band. With ShadowParty, however, this is more frustrating: the two New Order members – bassist Tom Chapman and former Marion guitarist Phil Cunningham – are only relatively recent additions. Despite Josh Hager and Jeff Friedl, Devo's current keyboardist and drummer, as the other forces behind this slightly supergroup, their debut can't shed the spectre of that more-established employer. Still, New Order fans will enjoy *Present Tense*, and *Vowel Movement* raises the ghost of a youthful Hooky, while *Reverse The Curse* again turns to New Order's ecstasy-fuelled period, adding what sounds like an LCD Soundsystem bassline. Weirdly, though, *Truth* could be Marc Bolan's *Get It On* colliding with Prince's *Paisley Park*, while *Taking Over* appears to add Eddie Vedder to a *Brotherhood*-era chorus. There are excuses to party, but this remains a somewhat pale shadow of the past.

Wyndham Wallace

VERDICT

7/10

The Alarm

EQUALS

THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY RECORDING COMPANY

Great things were once anticipated for The Alarm. Over the years, however, they've been increasingly written out of the history books: their last brush with the charts came only after they adopted a pseudonym, The Poppy Fields. Now, fired up after Mike Peters and his wife, who plays alongside him, faced down cancer – both are happily in remission – they return with the band's first album in eight years. Of course, one thing that perhaps held them back was their refusal to adjust to the times. *Equals* follows that pattern, remaining fan-friendly but unlikely to win newcomers without the endorsement of a band such as, say, Foo Fighters, with whom their rockier numbers bear comparison. But, with a husky passion, Peters still roars hoary anthems such as the terrace-friendly *Peace Now* and *Two Rivers* – which adds subtle electronic flourishes – while *Neutral* maintains a tradition of four-pint-friendly lyrics such as: "I'm not on anybody's side/ Except my own". *Wyndham Wallace*

VERDICT

7/10

"JOY"
TY SEGALL && WHITE FENCE

Ty Segall & White Fence

JOY

DRAG CITY

Following on from their 2012 collaborative record, *Hair*, fecund garage rocker Ty Segall teams back up with the equally productive Tim Presley. Across 15 tracks, they seem to indulge every whim and every 'why not?' decision – and the result is one that is stylistically all over the place; moving from folk-pop to prog to gutsy garage-rock to surf-rock instrumentals – basically anywhere it wants to. There's a touch of Royal Trux about the record and the brevity of some tracks results in hearing snippets rather than songs: un-fleshed-out ideas or half-thoughts. This can make for both a rewarding and frustrating listen, as the album hurtles through genres with gusto, but also struggles to gain anything resembling consistency or coherence – tracks such as *Rock Flute* just seem intentionally obstreperous in their inclusion. That said, there's no denying the seamless and exhilarating charge of *Body Behavior* or the Big Star-esque lushness of *My Friend*. *Daniel Dylan Wray*

VERDICT
6/10

Gang Gang Dance

KAZUASHITA

4AD

With Gang Gang Dance's sixth album, 4AD appear to have completed their lengthy transition from one of the world's finest (predominantly) arthouse-indie labels to one of its finest (predominantly) arthouse-pop labels. The band's own journey is similarly intrepid: only Lizzi Bougatsos' sticky-sweet, pitched-up vocal and three short interludes – like the malfunctioning robot music of *(infirma terrae)* – link them to 2004's experimental *Revival Of The Shittest*. So the eight-minute title track starts like The Orb before glitchy electronica develops into the sound of Kraftwerk dragged to 22nd-century Japan, and *Snake Dub* is full of backwards vocals and cut-and-paste synth jags. The wonky *Young Boy (Marika In Amerika)* is full of glistening surfaces, rattling percussion and sky-scraping voices, but they're at their most accessible on *J-TREE*, which startles with surprisingly moving samples of Native American protestors and would sit well on Peter Gabriel's Real World label. *Wyndham Wallace*

VERDICT
7/10

Paradise
THE SOUND OF IV

LONG LIVE VINYL CHOICE

Various Artists

PARADISE: THE SOUND OF IVOR RAYMONDE

BELLA UNION

Regular readers of these pages will be aware of the ever-expanding catalogue of indie treasures released by Simon Raymonde's Bella Union label. Fewer will be familiar with the stunning body of work his father – the arranger, musical director, producer and songwriter Ivor Raymonde – was responsible for before his death in 1990. This 26-track boxset, largely in mono, is a heartfelt tribute, curated by Simon and Kieron Tyler. Ivor's lush orchestration elevated stone-cold classics such as Dusty Springfield's *I Only Want To Be With You*, The Walker Brothers' sublime *Make It Easy On Yourself* and Billy Fury's *Halfway To Paradise*. We're also reminded of Raymonde's work with a young Bowie *(Love You Till Tuesday)* and Tom Jones *(Little Lonely One)*, as well as lesser-known rarities with Cindy Cole and Helen Shapiro. Simon Raymonde's moving liner notes and a track-by-track commentary by Tyler make this an essential document of the works of a true great of British music. *Gary Walker*

VERDICT
9/10

77:78
JELLIES

77:78

JELLIES

HEAVENLY RECORDS

According to Aaron Fletcher and Tim Parkin – members of The Bees, now officially on hiatus too long – *Jellies* was recorded in an old water tank that once belonged to Queen Victoria. True or not, the claim suits a wonderfully eccentric collection blessed by the same harmonies that made their other band so delightful. Naturally, their fondness for the 60s also remains intact, so *Jellies* offers many of the pleasures of a late night spent discovering a friend's psychedelic LP collection. On *If I'm Anything*, they're a playful 5th Dimension, while *Copper Nail* uses delicate Omnichord trills to add sparkle to its laidback shuffle. There's further Omnichord on *E.S.T.W.D*, a song whose enviably carefree sentiment is encapsulated in its chorus: "Everybody sees the world so differently/ But you see the same, the same as me". Add the artful, Beck-esque *Shepherd's Song*, and *Chilli* – the sound of ? & The Mysterians covering Datarock – for a perfect summer. *Wyndham Wallace*

VERDICT

8/10

matty
dejavu

Matty

DÉJÀVU

MATTY UNLIMITED/AWAL

Matthew Tavares – aka Matty – is best known for his work with BadBadNotGood; Toronto's jazz and hip-hop instrumentalists famed for their collaborations with the likes of Kendrick Lamar; Rihanna; Tyler, The Creator; Ghostface Killah; Earl Sweatshirt and Mick Jenkins, to name a paltry few. While still a core member of the outfit, Matty has taken time out from touring with BBNG to mastermind this brilliant debut solo record. The resulting nine tracks take the experimental ideology and progressive approach of BBNG and transpose it firmly onto a bedrock of psychedelic synth-pop. Sonically, it's an enthralling mix between The Beach Boys, Toro Y Moi and Tame Impala – not least because of Tavares' and Kevin Parker's drawling vocal similarities to (and shared influence from) Brian Wilson. From the sun-bleached synths of *Clear* to the jazz-fusion wanderings at the tail-end of *Polished*, a sense of unbridled joy permeates the sound of *Déjàvu,* which makes it one of the most delightful listens of the year so far. *Sam Willis*

VERDICT

8/10

FIELD DIVISION
Dark Matter Dreams

Field Division

DARK MATTER DREAMS

BELLA UNION

With a cover featuring hats and paisley shirts silhouetted against an idyllic sunset, it's no surprise Des Moines' Field Division wish it were the 70s. That's transparent from the fluid, laid-back opener, *River In Reverse*, with Evelyn Taylor and Nicholas Frampton harmonising luxuriously, while *Big Sur, Golden Hour* combines Stevie Nicks-esque vocals with rich David Crosby-esque acoustic guitars. The Yeats-inspired *Innisfree (Let's Be The Peace Now)* ramps up the Fleetwood Mac flavours further, especially with its closing, tasteful guitar licks; plus, there was never any doubt *Siddhartha* would feature a sitar, its psychedelic vocal effects eager to woo George Harrison back from the dead. If he heard *This Is How Your Love Destroys Me* and its shoegaze climax, he might just be tempted: it's a beautiful finale to a track that adds pedal steel to an otherwise delicately arranged slice of Laurel Canyon Americana. *Wyndham Wallace*

VERDICT

7/10

REVIEWS EXTRA

John Coltrane

BOTH DIRECTIONS AT ONCE

IMPULSE!

An entire album cut by Coltrane and his classic quartet in March 1963 at Van Gelder Studios finally sees the light of day. The day before recording *John Coltrane And Johnny Hartman*, Coltrane laid down this session, with some of the compositions never being released; the tapes haven't been touched since. As Sonny Rollins put it: "This is like finding a new room in the Great Pyramid."

BLACK RAINBOW SOUND
MENACE BEACH

Menace Beach

BLACK RAINBOW SOUND

MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES

Brix Smith Start guests as the lo-fi Leeds supergroup make a diversion from the fuzz-fuelled alt-indie of last year's *Lemon Memory* deep into woozy analogue-synth weirdness territory. Guitars pushed to the fringes, these late-night concoctions remain melodically lush, occasionally euphoric and often bizarre, with Eagulls producer Matt Peel at the controls.

Sun on the Square

The Innocence Mission

SUN ON THE SQUARE

BELLA UNION

Bella Union boss Simon Raymonde was delighted to finally sign The Innocence Mission, whose 1999 album *Birds Of My Neighbourhood* he rates in his top-three LPs ever made. Karen Peris' enchanting voice stars on this bucolic folky treasure adorned with affecting violin, viola and nylon-strung guitar.

Arp

ZEBRA

MEXICAN SUMMER

Ambient experimentalist Alexis Georgopoulos's fifth album is a beguiling, time-hopping, genre-bending fusion of many contradictory elements into 11 instrumental tracks of free-range electronica. Rhythm is always to the fore, however, and the eclectic flow makes perfect sense: the way diverse sonic elements and instrumentation are spliced together is mightily impressive.

Dirty Projectors

LAMP LIT PROSE

DOMINO

Barely a year has elapsed since the last entry in multi-instrumentalist David Longstreth's ever-eclectic catalogue. This time round, he's joined by guests including Robin Pecknold, HAIM and Syd on a more hopeful, funky collection, cramming in a tireless parade of ideas and changes in direction. *Lamp Lit Prose* is released on limited-edition red and blue starburst vinyl, with 16-page libretto.

GULP
ALL GOOD WISHES

Gulp

ALL GOOD WISHES

E.L.K. RECORDS

This sophomore album from Gulp – a trio comprising Super Furry Animals' Guto Pryce, his partner Lindsey Leven and guitarist Gid Goundrey – tries its best to resist giving in to its dreamier, psychedelic side. The tension between the restrictions of the three-minute pop format and the endless vistas of electronic production make for a rewarding listen, rounded off by Lindsey's sun-drenched vocal hooks.

Melody's Echo Chamber

BON VOYAGE

FAT POSSUM RECORDS

French musician Melody Prochet releases her first new LP in six years. It follows her self-titled debut, produced by Tame Impala's Kevin Parker, and has collaborations with The Amazing's Fredrik Swahn and Dungen's Reine Fiske, Gustav Ejstes and Johan Holmegaard. It's a multilingual juxtaposition of breathy splendour and sonic exploration.

Tomberlin

AT WEDDINGS

SADDLE CREEK

A delicate and wistfully serene record from Saddle Creek's latest signing. Kentucky's Sarah Beth Tomberlin is the daughter of a Baptist pastor and this debut produced by Arcade Fire's Owen Pallett is an exploration of faith and the battle to shape one's own identity. "I am a tornado with big green eyes and a heartbeat," she sings on *Tornado*, to devastating effect.

TOURE KUNDA
Lambi Golo

Toure Kunda

LAMBI GOLO

SHELLSHOCK

Four decades into a career that's seen the Senegalese band release a string of albums in no fewer than six languages, while remaining prolific social activisits, *Lambi Golo* is a genre-melding delight. Its songs collected over many years, and recorded in "village studio" conditions, it combines Mbalax, Casamancais rhythms, reggae and funk to joyous effect.

Leon Vynehall

NOTHING IS STILL

NINJA TUNE

Fêted DJ and electronic composer Leon Vynehall departs from his EPs' more dancefloor-orientated sound to deliver a stunningly atmospheric, textural debut. It's an emotional work, shapeshifting through cinematic moods to deliver an immersive, artful listen you'll feel compelled to return to. Plus, there's a boxed version on heavyweight vinyl with a limited-edition paperback novella.

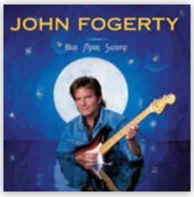
Rolling Blackouts C.F.
HOPE DOWNS

Rolling Blackouts Coastal Fever

HOPE DOWNS

SUB POP

A debut from Melbourne's Rolling Blackouts Coastal Fever following the infectious promise of two superb EPs. Chiming, ramshackle guitars and insistent drums and basslines are the order of the day over 35 exhilarating minutes, with *Talking Straight* an early contender for critics' singles-of-the-year lists.



John Fogerty

VINYL REISSUES

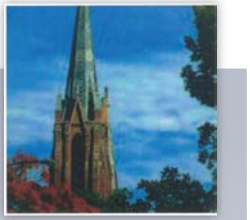
BMG

With a follow-up to 2013's *Wrote A Song For Everyone* in the pipeline, the Creedence Clearwater Revival co-founder celebrates the 20th anniversary of the Grammy Award-winning *Blue Moon Swamp* with a reissue campaign. It kicks off with that album on 180g blue vinyl, with *Centerfield*, *Premonition*, *Eye Of The Zombie* and *Deja Vu All Over Again* to follow.

Genre Hopping

Arty indie-pop

Chris Parkin guides us through the latest vinyl offerings from an emerging crop of indie bands who blend DIY experimentalism with all manner of genres to create off-kilter pop…



Over the past few years, partisans of the indie-pop and rock worlds have retreated back beneath the parapet, returning to their own comfortable niche of underachievement. But with Goat Girl, Girl Ray, The Magic Gang and others causing a fuss lately, there appears once again to be youthful interest in bands marrying artful DIY aesthetics with catchy but slightly awkward pop songwriting.

The most exciting recent release from this nook is Virginia Wing's *Ecstatic Arrow*. The Manchester duo's third album is an inventive kaleidoscope of propulsive dream-pop that's both warmly empathetic and world-weary at the same time. Weaving in exotic 'fourth world' sounds, parping synths and saxophone, and post-punk vibrancy, as well as Alice Merida Richards' lyrical fuck-yous to mansplainers and anyone else out there harshing her vibe, *Ecstatic Arrow* makes most music in 2018 sound humdrum in comparison.

> VIRGINIA WING'S *ECSTATIC ARROW* IS AN INVENTIVE KALEIDOSCOPE OF PROPULSIVE DREAM-POP THAT'S WARMLY EMPATHETIC AND WORLD-WEARY AT THE SAME TIME

On a similar tip, but not out until September, is Teleman's latest full-length, *Family Of Aliens*. The band forged from the ashes of the much-underrated Pete And The Pirates are another indie-pop outfit whose interest in the teutonic rhythms of krautrock provides a groovesome foundation for their angular, heartfelt art-pop anthems. This is album number four, and should see them winning new fans.

Music writers first coined the term 'indie soul' in the wake of Dirty Projectors' 2009 album *Bitte Orca*, which refracted slinky contemporary R&B through the lens of tropical indie. But with guitarist and vocalist Amber Coffman no longer in the band – controversially, it would seem – David Longstreth's art-pop project has returned to its old blend of taut, cloudbusting highlife and knotty vocal harmonies on new (ninth) album, *Lamp Lit Prose*. Longstreth might add a little disco-ball electronica this time around, but this is the agreeably familiar sound of a band which, alongside Vampire Weekend, helped reintroduce African pop into the indie realm back in the 2000s.

The first album from Madrid's lo-fi indie-poppers and Thee Headcoatees devotees Hinds, 2016's *Leave Me Alone*, was a world removed from Dirty Projectors' experimental fare. A charmingly shambolic but ultimately lightweight affair, it left anyone who was curious about the hype surrounding the four-piece flummoxed. But thanks in part to some guidance from Strokes producer Gordon Raphael, the young group's follow-up, *I Don't Run*, is a moreish treasure brimming with scrappy, gabba-hey garage-pop that teeters on the brink but delivers smiles for miles.

Existing on a much bleaker indie-rock plane than any of the above is Belfast band Girls Names, whose latest album *Stains On Silence* is a regal, noise-strafed heartbreak album indebted to the stalking bass, taut guitars and cavernous drums of post punk. Released by Tough Love, the label responsible for albums by Priests and Ulrika Spacek over the past year or so, *Stains On Silence* is a maelstrom of doom and gloom with fleeting, pretty moments of hope. An album that pitches up somewhere between Girls Names' murk and Virginia Wing's vivid art-pop is *Addendum*, the latest strange (and occasionally frightening) album from goth-pop eccentric John Maus. ●

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HOW TO BUY HEADPHONE AMPLIFIERS

Looking to make the most of your headphone setup? **Paul Rigby** looks at the power source and offers useful buying advice on a range of headphone amplifiers…

How do you listen to your records? Do you use speakers or headphones? Or both? Some people prefer to listen to their music via headphones while, for others, there's little choice. If you're in a small living space and have late-night listening and the neighbours to consider – or you run the risk of waking up the kiddies, or if they or your pets threaten the safety of your precious speakers, then headphones it is.

But how do you use your headphones? Do you plug them into your main amplifier, perchance? If that's so, then I have to say that I'm frowning right at you. You've – quite possibly – invested a lot of cash on your turntable, arm, cartridge, amplifier and, let's not forget, the headphones themselves… and you're just plugging them into the amplifier's headphone socket?

You might ask: what's the problem with that? Well, it's a basic argument of hi-fi, really. Hi-fi manufacturers prefer to divide the signal chain up into separate component parts. There are plenty of integrated amplifiers on the market – some nice examples, too.

That said, generally speaking, you'll achieve better sound quality if you separate the controls from the power source to get a preamp and a power amp. You'll improve sound still further if you separate the stereo power amp into two mono-block power amps. You can ramp up the quality beyond that if you take the power supply out of the preamp and separate it, too, and so on. The perfect amplifier should occupy about 30 boxes. I exaggerate, but only slightly…

Hence, the primary message from this guide is you really need to take the headphone amplifier out of your integrated amplifier and separate it.

The reason has to do with noise. When you have a headphone amplifier sitting inside an integrated amplifier, that headphone amp is open to invasion by noise from the adjacent

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SENNHEISER HDV 820
NEUTRIK

Sennheiser's HDV 820 Digital Headphone Amplifier/DAC

power supply, the capacitors, the circuit board and just about every other electronic component in there.

This noise is not loud and annoying, which is why most people live with it and never see it as a problem. That's only because their brains have tuned it out, in the same way you tune out unwanted noise in your home environment such as planes flying overhead and so on, over time.

NOISE REDUCTION

The noise produced by an amplifier is low key to human ears, but wholly destructive for musical details. It masks the subtleties – and sound is surprisingly fragile. Noise spreads a fine blanket over fine nuances. The amount and quality of reverb from a cymbal tap; the type and structure of a strum on an acoustic guitar; that little catch in the voice during an emotional delivery. These can be seen as minor details, but they're susceptible to noise, and all of these 'little things' add up, with the end result of the music losing something – soul, perhaps? Certainly realism. Definitely detail.

Separating the headphone amplifier from an integrated amplifier, a music centre or your power-speaker setup will go some way to rescuing this detail, to be enjoyed by your ears.

The way forward, then, is to plug your headphones into a standalone headphone amplifier and then plug that into your amplifier. You do this in the same way you would add a CD player to the same amplifier. The headphone amplifier then becomes just another external hi-fi component.

If you do buy a headphone amplifier, make sure that it has the connections you need, though; not least the correct-sized socket for your headphones. Headphone sockets, of course, arrive in different sizes. Make sure that the termination of your headphones matches the socket(s) of your headphone amplifier. The most popular are 3.5mm or 6.35mm phono type. Rather more exotic headphone amplifiers feature alternatives, including a multi-pronged DIN socket or a balanced type, which includes a three- or four-pin XLR connection. Other sockets include the 4.4mm Pentaconn. Its plug resembles a basic phono-type, but with tweaks. More than ever before, there's a multitude of connectivity options out there. It probably goes without saying, that you simply need to remember to match the right headphone socket with the right plug.

> NOISE SPREADS A FINE BLANKET OVER SUBTLETIES: THE AMOUNT AND QUALITY OF REVERB FROM A CYMBAL TAP; THE TYPE AND STRUCTURE OF A STRUM ON AN ACOUSTIC GUITAR; THAT LITTLE CATCH IN THE VOICE… ADD UP DOZENS OF THOSE 'LITTLE THINGS' AND THE MUSIC BEGINS TO LOSE SOMETHING

Speaking of the esoteric, and this point generally relates only to more expensive headphone amplifiers, you may come across headphone amplifiers powered by valves. I use two contrasting valve variants myself ▶

ERZETICH
Perfidus

Image www.eliteaudiouk.com

Erzetich's "faster than sound" Class A Perfidus headphone amp

DSD
USB
OPT
COAX
UNBAL
BAL

Image en-uk.sennheiser.com

and much prefer them to the usual solid-state designs for higher-end headphones – but the preference is just that, one of personal taste.

In general and very basic terms, a valve-based headphone amplifier will give you finer midrange detail, sometimes a warmer soundstage effect and an organic bass response, while solid-state affairs provide strong bass slam with slightly finer-edged midrange detail, along with a fast-paced presentation.

Often, especially in more contemporary products, the core technology that's used to produce the amplifier itself is only part of the story. That's because a lot of current hi-fi is designed to cover multiple tasks. Gone are the days when turntables just played records, for example. Now you can plug a phono amp, USB port and, yes, headphone amplifier into them for increased functionality. The same can be said of external headphone amplifiers. The most popular addition is the insertion of a digital-to-analogue converter (or DAC), which enables you to add a laptop, for example, and create a useful little desktop system. The purity of a standalone headphone amplifier is preferable but, if you need to save a few pounds, a dual-purpose headphone amp might be just the ticket.

Before I talk about specific headphone amplifiers, I must add that I will be ignoring those aimed specifically and only at mobile use. These units are battery-based and tend not to allow easy connection to a home hi-fi system. Mobile headphone amplifiers are a genre unto themselves.

BUYER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Which headphone amplifier should you buy? Here's a broad selection from three different price points. These are just a few recommended choices, and not an exhaustive list. There are other options we've not been able to include due to space reasons. Why not write or email in and tell us about your favourites so that other readers can be made aware of those, too? ●

Trilogy's ultra-high-end 933 headphone amplifier

TRILOGY 933
TRILOGY
RC-5
VOL
INPUT
BAL

Image www.trilogyaudio.com

BUDGET UP TO £400

Inexpensive options to get the job done – plus, they double as preamps

SCHIIT
MAGNI 3

PRICE £110

WWW.ELECTROMOD.CO.UK

Able to drive just about any headphones out there, this diminutive bargain provides basic guts, but also low-noise fine detail. You can connect the unit to a power amp and use it as a preamp to save cash, too.

REGA
EAR

PRICE £180

WWW.REGA.CO.UK

Based upon the same build techniques as used in the company's popular Brio integrated amp, this little box punches way above its weight and arrives with independent mute and volume controls, to enable use as a preamp.

Power
Mute
rega

ARCAM irDAC-II
INPUT
VOLUME
USB
OPTICAL1
OPTICAL2
COAX1
COAX2

ARCAM
IRDAC-II DSD

PRICE £399

WWW.ARCAM.CO.UK

The Irdac-II offers an ESS SABRE-based DAC (24-bit/384kHz and DSD 128) as a partner to the headphone amp, plus Bluetooth. It has a disciplined soundstage, good bass impact, lots of features and good integration (thanks to the optical ports) if you want to use it with your TV.

MID-RANGE £400-£1,000

Essential choices that introduce extra features and finesse

RNHP Precision Headphone Amplifier
Rupert Neve Designs
INPUT SELECT
HEADPHONE
VOLUME

RUPERT NEVE DESIGNS
RNHP

PRICE £469

WWW.RUSSANDREWS.COM

From the legendary studio hardware company comes a vastly superior headphone amplifier at this price point, which also worries more expensive amplifier designs. The RNHP takes you a step or two closer to the action – but not too close.

ICON AUDIO
HP8 MKII

PRICE £849

WWW.ICONAUDIO.COM

The Icon Audio HP8 MKII SE offers a sweeping, open and broad soundstage that allows music to really flex its muscles while enabling even the most nuanced and delicate of details to be revealed to the ear. A design of quality and elegance.

VOLUME
OUTPUT Ω
MONO
STEREO
Icon Audio HP8 MKII HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER

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Perfidus
class-a evil headphone amplifier

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PERFIDUS

PRICE £999

WWW.ELITEAUDIOUK.COM

Solid-state fans will lap up the accuracy and precision of the Perfidus' performance. Both treble and midrange are implemented superbly, with a transparency that will delight many ears.

HIGH-END £1,000+

These rarefied designs offer top-quality featuresets, components and fittings

Questyle
CMA600i

QUESTYLE
CMA600I

PRICE £1,199

WWW.SCVDISTRIBUTION.CO.UK

Possibly the most neutral piece of hi-fi technology I've ever listened to and a brilliant choice at the higher price bracket. Based on Current Mode Amplification and a 32-bit AK4490 DAC chipset from AKM, you could consider it the Switzerland of audiophile technology.

SENNHEISER
HDV 820

PRICE £2,100

EN-UK.SENNHEISER.COM

The admirable and low-noise performance in the superlative HDV 820's single-ended configuration is surpassed significantly during XLR use. It includes an ESS SABRE32 DAC, handling up to 32-bit/384kHz and also DSD256 files of up to 12.3MHz.

SENNHEISER HDV 820

TRILOGY 933

TRILOGY
933

PRICE £2,795

WWW.TRILOGYAUDIO.COM

This Class A design houses a significant amount of carefully considered engineering. Arriving with a separate power supply and run off a remote control only, the 933 is both understated in approach and detailed in application. A remarkable amplifier.

DREAM MACHINES

MCINTOSH
MC275 MK VI

£7,100 *www.mcintoshlabs.com*

In our series showcasing high-end hi-fi to die for, **Paul Rigby** guides you through the features of an ultra high-spec power amplifier that positively glows with analogue radiance…

The MC275 MK VI is a supremely high-end power amplifier to slaver over and to drink in with the eyes – because there's a lot going on here, and a lot of care and attention has been paid to its aesthetics. Packing 75 watts and weighing in at a hefty 30.5kg, the MC275 is dominated by whopping great transformers and supporting valves. Sporting balanced and unbalanced outputs, this is the sixth generation of the amplifier – so the MC275 has been finely tuned over the years. Oh, and those valves? Each one features a little LED to light it up during use. ●

❶ **GREEN LIGHT**
The valves turn amber (during the warm-up phase) and then green when the power is on to indicate readiness… and red if there's a valve failure

❷ **POST PRODUCTION**
The speaker binding posts are patented gold-plated Solid Cinch models

❸ **KEEP IT STAINLESS STEEL**
The amp's chassis is made from polished stainless steel

1
3

ROKSAN XERXES 20 PLUS

CLASSIC TURNTABLE PLUS ARM, CARTRIDGE AND VSC 2

£7,765 www.roksan.co.uk 0208 900 6801

Paul Rigby reviews the Xerxes 20 Plus, Roksan's classic turntable, with a different arm combo, a brand-new cartridge and the Caspian VSC 2 Vinyl System Control

Roksan are currently in a bit of an odd situation, analogue-wise. While the high-end Xerxes turntable is moving along quite nicely, the top-of-the-range arm, the Artemis, has been withdrawn and the next arm down the list, The Pug, is under review. These two arms are currently being upgraded and replaced, respectively. As for the top-of-the-range Shiraz cartridge… Who knows?

Hence, Roksan's analogue product line is in a state of flux. In an odd way, though, if you're not awash with cash to buy the full-flight Roksan experience (a Shiraz cartridge will set you back around £3,000 on its own, for example), but have enough to get in on a lower rung, then the turntable setup that Roksan have supplied for this review might just be the combo to get you underway, with upgrades to be considered as and when funds allow.

The veteran Xerxes turntable (£3,200) feels relatively compact at 450x370x115mm, but also solid, weighing in at 12kg. It features a three-plinth sandwich, where

everything is separated from everything else by some form of rubberised feet or damping. The upper plinth sits on rubberised feet, which pass through to the bottom plinth. The connection is made via what Roksan term 'anti-vibration mounts'. That is, there are rubber-type mounts that sit in between the suspended platter sections.

The established Nima Unipivot Tonearm (£600) includes a decoupled counterweight for easy azimuth correction. It also features aluminium alloy tubing, a stainless-steel bearing and Van Den Hul cabling.

CORUS LINE

The new Corus2 MM cartridge features a nude Shibata fine-line stylus, attached to a tapered aluminium tube that dangles from the front, which is protected by a fold-down cover. It's based upon the Audio-Technica VM750 but differs in terms of the coils, winding compliance and suspension.

Separate from the turntable is a large box – as large as a CD player, say. This is known as the VSC S2 (Vinyl System Control, £3,500). Inside are a number of products, bundled together: an RPM speed controller, plus the RPP phono stage and two power supplies.

A note – I didn't install this turntable, Roksan did. I wanted to replicate the customer experience here, because your dealer will, or should, install your Xerxes. Complain if they don't.

Combining dynamic goth strains (Andreas Gross) with Earl Coleman's vocal jazz, I'm able to appreciate, yet discount, the built-in phono amp. It's well behaved, with a warming tone, but lacks air and dynamic reach. An external model would be my preference.

The Xerxes/Nima/Corus2 offers a high-resolution output, but there's a touch more noise in the system than you would expect in and around a top-end turntable. Of course, this is down to the lower-priced arm and cartridge. That said, this combo does provide lots of highlights, including immense bass performance which has the explosive impact of a cruise missile. The soundstage focus, midrange precision and more are also welcome. In terms of detail extraction, this Xerxes system provides a full printout of everything that occurs in the music. When listening, you never feel short-changed.

An additional mention must be made of the new Corus2 cartridge. When I separate this product from the Xerxes and test it with other designs at its price point, I find the Corus2 to be a superb performer – offering midrange insight, clarity and a sense of space that will delight the listener.

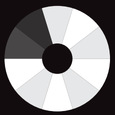
VERDICT

Taken together, the system we have on review here provides an ideal entry point for any upgrader who wants to grow into the full Xerxes kit on a gradual basis – upgrading the arm later, then the cartridge, and so on. This review system can be considered as a sort of Xerxes 'starter kit', with the system seen here offering a superb bass response and delicate upper frequencies. Overall, it's a viable and recommended entry into high-end listening. ●

> THIS COMBO PROVIDES LOTS OF HIGHLIGHTS, INCLUDING IMMENSE BASS PERFORMANCE WITH THE IMPACT OF A CRUISE MISSILE. THE SOUNDSTAGE FOCUS AND THE MIDRANGE PRECISION ARE ALSO WELCOME

VERDICT

PROS	CONS
BASS TIMING	PHONO AMP
PACE	STARTER-KIT SONICS
FOCUS	
PRE-INSTALLED FOR YOU	



SCORE

26/33⅓

The Vinylist

ALAN HARWOOD

Reader **Alan Harwood** was bitten by the collecting bug at an early age – then he became a sales rep for a record company, so he could spend more quality time around vinyl…

To be in with a chance of seeing your record collection in *Long Live Vinyl*, email your details and a picture to gary.walker@anthem-publishing.com

What was the first record you bought?
"On a family visit to a seaside town, in a second-hand shop which had some singles outside in a stand, I purchased a fire-damaged copy of Darts' *Come Back My Love*. It smelt a bit, but it was in a picture sleeve and played fine. My first album was Stiff Little Fingers' *Inflammable Material*. I remember my best schoolmate and I started to number our records with stickers, and this was my number 1. After hearing The Damned's Top 20 single *Love Song* on the radio, I was hooked on collecting, and this release came in red vinyl and four different picture sleeves!

"I was off, I had to have everything by them – different pressings, coloured vinyl… Later on, I was lucky enough to get a job as a sales rep for a record company, so I could go to my favourite places – record shops!"

Which artists and genres are you most interested in?
"Besides The Damned, I started to collect other bands, including Placebo, Radiohead, Suede, The Fall, Neil Young, The Beatles and Sonic Youth. I sold a fair bit of my collection in recent years. But I now only collect Sonic Youth and related members. I'm a real completist."

How many records do you have in all?
"I've got about 400 albums in total, including 12"s and 10"s, and I also have about 550 7" singles, including some Russian flexi discs, plus too many other formats to mention."

What's the most valuable record in your collection?
"Sonic Youth's *EVOL* 2x12" one-sided acetates, signed by Thurston Moore (see pic)."

What's the Holy Grail record you'd most like to own?
"I'm currently looking for Ciccone Youth's *The Whitey Album* – the Australian-only version with a red sleeve – and any white labels, test pressings and acetates, etc."

What's your listening setup?
"My setup is as follows: turntable – Rega Planar 3; receiver/amp – Sony STR-DB930; speakers – Pioneer CS-970s (I've tried other speakers, but I've never found anything that sounds as good as them). I also have a 1966 Wurlitzer 3000 jukebox, full of all sorts of rock, pop, punk and rock 'n' roll classics." ●

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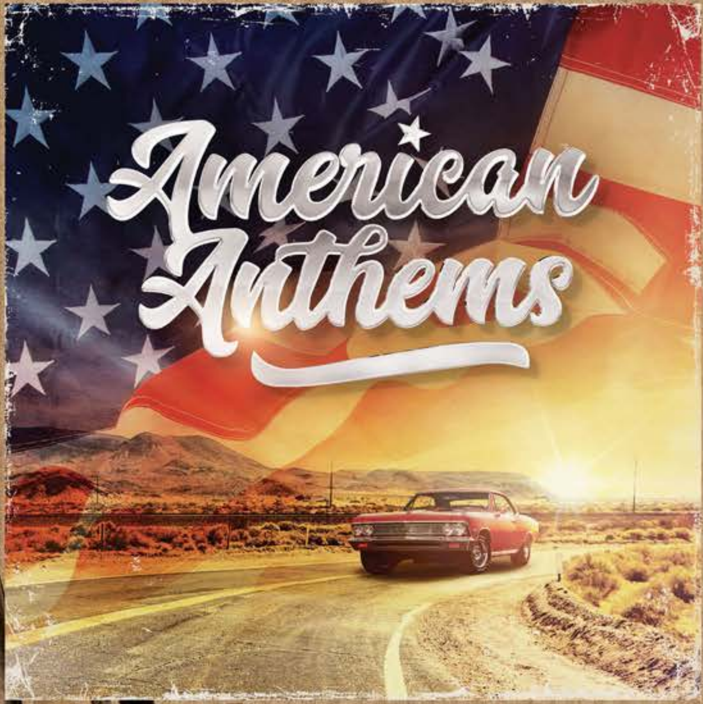
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